IRISHMEN OF TO-DAY

SIR HORACE PLUNKETT

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AND HIS PLACE IN THE IRISH NATION

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PREFACE

I WROTE this book before the Rising. Had I written it since I might have shaped it somewhat differently. Yet the Rising has not altered facts, it has but emphasized some of them. It has reminded the world of the existence of Ireland; it has made it clear that the Ulster Unionist policy of no change whatever in the government of the country is impossible; it has increased the influence of non-party men like Sir Horace Plunkett and Lord Macdonnell; it has made it more manifest than ever that not only has England not the right, she has not the ability to govern Ireland.

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CHAPTER I

BY WAY OF EXPLANATION

In a study of a living man the chief difficulty is to deal with his personality without intrusion or adulation or impertinence. In biography it is a man's private character, his adventures, his sins and his secrets which give it interest and romance, but with a living man this is forbidden and generally inaccessible ground; and public life needs a magic pen to give it romance. In any case it is as impossible to write a study of a man of action whose work is yet in the doing as to write the history of a war while the casualty lists are still pouring in: the necessary perspective is lacking. I am sure nobody wants a personal book, least of all Sir Horace Plunkett himself. I would go further and say that the time has not yet come for the history of his work in Ireland to be written: mere facts and statistics can

be obtained already without difficulty. We cannot have an adequate presentation of a movement while it is in progress or of a man while he is in our midst. But while artistic treatment is difficult when the subject cannot be viewed in the repose of fulfilment, there are nevertheless some men, some movements which cannot be allowed to wait for future presentation. It is important that the work of such a man as Sir Horace Plunkett should be known to-day, and the inspiration of his work felt by the present generation. The future can have its artistic biography of him: I shall be content if I can make him known to some who do not already know him, and interpret the fuller meaning of his work to some who may have misunderstood it; and I think the happiest means whereby I can do this, without throwing more fuel on the controversial flames that surround him, is to write a study not of Sir Horace Plunkett in relation to rural Ireland, but of rural Ireland in relation to Sir Horace Plunkett.

I feel that to some extent, especially perhaps in the two last chapters, I have strayed from the point. Yet a study of any public man in Ireland, except an artist or a poet, if we are to be allowed any speculation as to the future, must lead us inevitably into political questions. And in order to come myself to a considered opinion about

Sir Horace Plunkett, I found it necessary to write several chapters as an exercise to determine my real views on Irish affairs, to precipitate definite from incoherent ideas. By some people Sir Horace Plunkett is considered vain, as a man who likes to play the part of a benevolent despot; by others obstinate, as one who, when he has formed an opinion or discovered what he thinks to be the solution of a problem, is unable to see the point of view of those who think differently, or to compromise with them in any way; there are few who do not think him lacking in tact and perspicacity, for in his great attempt to explain himself to his countrymen, to tell the Catholics that he was not ultra-Protestant and the Protestants that he had no leaning to Catholicism, to show the Nationalists that he saw the limitations of Irish Unionism and the Unionists that he was not a Home Ruler, he fell between the stools and made for himself enemies where he had looked to make friends.

The exercise of writing this book has left me where I was as regards Sir Horace Plunkett himself, uncertain whether he is a great man, or merely a very clever and able one with a special capacity for choosing the right men to carry out his ideas and to infuse life into them. He has been, perhaps, as one who has worked with him for many

years put it, "the brain of the movement of which 'Æ' was the spirit and Mr. Anderson the energy." But if my search has been so far abortive, it has at least led me to a definite conclusion as to the relative value of the co-operative movement. My attitude at first was that of a Laodicean: a sympathizer without energy or strong conviction. Writing this book has made me definitely enthusiastic. Every chapter has brought home to me the truth of Sir Horace Plunkett's insistence on the necessity of rebuilding Ireland from within, and with it the importance of Co-operation in so doing. It has also confirmed me in my view that if a man is to succeed in doing any good in this country he must identify himself not only with Ireland but also with the people of Ireland. And are not these conclusions about his work and his ideals conclusions, in effect, about Sir Horace Plunkett himself?

CHAPTER II

A PROPHET IS NOT WITHOUT HONOUR

"I was born in England," said Sir Horace Plunkett, speaking at a public dinner given in his honour in 1901, "I suppose that was my first mistake." A man is not necessarily a Chinaman because he was born in China: it would be as foolish to suggest that Sir Horace Plunkett is not in every respect an Irishmen as to count Lord Kitchener a countryman of ours from the accident of his birth. A dash of English or other foreign blood, even an English upbringing, is no bad thing for an Irishman: perhaps it acts as a steadying influence on our tendency to impulsiveness, and an English atmosphere kindles the feeling of nationality in as many Irishmen as it absorbs—it produces better Irishmen than the "West Briton" atmosphere.

Sir Horace Plunkett is essentially an Irishman: by family, for its traditions are associated with our history for centuries; by inclination and work, for his life has been devoted to the service of Ireland, though other fields more distinguished, perhaps, and more appreciative were open to

him. Indeed, the lot of the prophets has been his, and he is regarded without question as a great man by every country but his own. In Ireland he is only beginning to be appreciated by the bulk of the people as they are becoming less hide-bound by the restrictions of party politics.

Sir Horace Plunkett is not a man of strong constitution. After a boyhood spent between Killeen and Dunsany, and tempered by the influences of Eton and Oxford, his bad health induced him to go to America, to lead an open-air life. Ranching in the western states he gained his early experiences, and the rough world he was in rubbed off the edges which handicap rich men who have not the occasion or the grit to go through the mill before attempting propagandism and preaching.

At the age of thirty-three or so he returned to Ireland, fairly strong in health, and set himself to the uphill task to which he has devoted his life and from which no foreign allurements have tempted him. It was hard and discouraging work indeed, and no man not convinced of the soundness of his cause would have persisted in the face of such odds and such apathy. Perhaps he had been moved, too, by the inspiring advice in Standish O'Grady's "Tory Democracy," published not long before in 1886.

In his own words, the task before him and his associates was the adaptation to the special circumstances of Ireland of methods successfully pursued by communities similarly situated in other countries. After five years' pioneer work, helped by the Co-operative Union of England, the promoters of the Irish co-operative movement, which differed from the English movement in the very important respect that it aimed at agricultural co-operation, in England regarded as hopeless, felt that they had done enough to justify them in forming a separate and centralized Co-operative Union in Ireland, and that some wider control than that of more or less irresponsible individuals was required. Accordingly in 1894 the I.A.O.S. was inaugurated, Lord Monteagle, Sir Nugent Everard, Father Finlay and Mr. R. A. Anderson being, perhaps, the men most prominently associated with Sir Horace Plunkett, the first President of the society. It is interesting to observe that later on the English Agricultural Organization Society was modelled exactly on the I.A.O.S.

In the following year a letter of Sir Horace Plunkett's to the newspapers brought about the formation, under his chairmanship, of the celebrated Recess Committee in which he gathered together for perhaps the first time in the century members of all political

parties—Ulster manufacturers, Nationalist M.P.'s. Delegates from this committee visited Denmark, France and other countries, and its report in turn resulted in the institution of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Before the Department was set up Ireland was nominally administered in agricultural, as it has always been in general, matters by a multiplicity of boards; though in effect it was neglected entirely. In 1899 this incoherence was superseded by a central administration with the widest scope in agricultural, quasi-agricultural and industrial affairs. The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction was in no sense a replica of the British Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. Like the Land Act of 1903 (the last of a decade of startling changes), the constitution of the Department was the work of Irishmen in Ireland, not a ready-made scheme imposed by or accepted from outside rulers; and it contains many points of excellence that could not have been otherwise incorporated. It worked well at first, and enjoyed the public confidence which was by its very constitution as a democratic institution essential for its success, until political influences and elements foreign to agriculture gained control of it and changed its policy. When Sir Horace Plunkett lost his parliamentary seat for South County

Dublin the outcry of persons long exiled from power forced him to retire from his position as head of the Department, and from that day to this it has become ever more out of touch with the farmers and more dominated by anti-agricultural interests. The basic idea underlying the I.A.O.S. and the Department had been that they were twin institutions, complementary to one another. But jealousy or some incomprehensible motive caused the new vice-president of the Department to view the senior institution with suspicion and disfavour, and in the heated days when Home Rule was again becoming practical politics it was not hard to misrepresent the object of the I.A.O.S., to gloss over its benefits to the country and even to dispute the telling fact of its large membership. The plain truth was that by its very nature the I.A.O.S. was bound to wage war on behalf of the unorganized farmers against the shopkeepers and gombeen men who were, at that time at any rate, preying upon their helplessness. No one was better off than they, and therefore no one was better able to provide funds for the party's war-chest.

Sir Horace Plunkett lost his seat in Parliament and his position as Vice-president of the Department. By ceasing to be a politician even in name he did not however,

lose influence in the country. On the contrary he gained in influence considerably by losing his *ipso-facto* enemies, and he had more time to devote his energies to the work in which his public life in and for Ireland had been begun. But, though he was no longer in politics or even in Government service, he was not to be relieved of the attentions of public men. He was frequently in controversies, which were none of his making, with Mr. T. W. Russell, his successor at the Department, who had never tired of relentlessly attacking him, and from time to time he received more or less negligible abuse in various quarters. He has repeatedly triumphed in these encounters with Mr. Russell. Even since the beginning of the European War there are instances of this. In spite of Mr. Russell's unqualified opposition, the Development Commission overrode his recommendations and made a grant to the I.A.O.S.; and in the Irish Food Production Committee they differed: agricultural opinion endorsed Sir Horace Plunkett's views, though Mr. Russell won an apparent victory.*

* Again when put to the practical test of Dublin food supply at the time of the Rebellion, it was Plunkett, not Russell, who grappled with the sudden problem, and gave proof of his power of organization and of dealing with emergencies, though it must be added that he wrote a most conciliatory letter to the papers in this connexion, denying that he had done any work which could be regarded in any way as Mr. Russell's proper province.

Though he left America when still a young man, he did not sever his connection with that country entirely. He found it necessary to return for a couple of months each winter, and when on these visits to the States he maintained intimate relations with many of the most prominent statesmen in America; he did much useful work there, so useful, indeed, that Mr. Roosevelt recently declared that he owed more in certain respects to Sir Horace Plunkett than to anyone in the world except Gifford Pinchot. He was mainly responsible for inaugurating the great American Country Life movement and had a most stimulating influence on the Conservation movement. He has a big reputation in the United States and was largely instrumental in drawing up the terms of reference of the American Commission of Rural Inquiry, which visited Europe and paid perhaps more attention to Ireland than to any other European country. The temptation for a man to forsake a land in which he receives the abuse of the Minister of Agriculture and all the voices controlled by him for one where he has already won the unique distinction of being the only foreign subject to receive the formal thanks of Congress, and that for doing the same work which earned abuse at home, must be great. But Sir Horace Plunkett is first and foremost an Irishman. Even the disgraceful

circumstances connected with the message sent by Congress publicly thanking him for his service to the United States, which was officially suppressed by the meanness of a politician and only reached him indirectly through its publication in an American newspaper, did not disgust him with Ireland, though it may not have increased his respect for the English governors of this country.

CHAPTER III

THE NEARER TO THE PEOPLE THE FURTHER FROM UNIONISM

NOWADAYS we are inclined to regard Sir Horace Plunkett as a non-politician. I suppose this is because he has not been communicative on political matters, since he has ceased to be a member of Parliament, and because of the non-political character of the I.A.O.S. We think of him now only as the President of that body; we have forgotten that he was for eight years a Unionist M.P., the founder of our Department of Agriculture, and for seven years its Vice-president, till politicians drove him from office.

We have in Ireland two kinds of Unionists: Unionists from prejudice and Unionists from conviction. I cannot pretend to be sufficiently impartial to write about a man who would come in the former category; to make a study of the other type is exhilarating. But is Sir Horace Plunkett a Unionist at all? The natural prejudices of his class as well as the result of quite honest thinking, based on unconscious prejudice, would tend to make him so. Yet I believe he is almost

the only man in Ireland, outside the dullards, who take no interest in their country's affairs, who is as nearly as possible a political neutral. Everything he has written or said on political matters during the last ten years has proclaimed this attitude, and I refuse to believe that the intermediate standpoint he has taken up was induced either from motives of cunning or expediency.

Just before the war broke out he came into the open with a proposal for settling the Ulster difficulty. In "A Better Way," a pamphlet he published with the sub-title of "An Appeal to Ulster not to Desert Ireland," he speaks for the unarmed section of the country. But it was not as a non-combatant dreading the horrors of war so much as in his capacity of co-operative leader that he felt a special reason to use all the influence he had to avert extreme measures. His movement alone in Ireland had touched all political sections without reference to their politics. The co-operative societies embraced men of every shade of opinion, not only in their aggregate membership, but on individual working committees all over the country. It is no exaggeration to say that he had succeeded in making the wolf lie down with the lamb in a way hitherto unknown in this country. Civil war, whatever the result, would not only have destroyed this millennial bliss but would also

have divorced Ulster, or part of it, from the rest of Ireland, and the separation would have meant the division of everything to which the title all-Irish could be applied, and with it the splitting in two of the Co-operative organization. It is no wonder, then, that Sir Horace Plunkett, relinquishing his long-sustained sphinxhood, once again appeared on the political stage.

Despite the fact that his proposal, inasmuch as it recognized the inevitability of Home Rule, was regarded by many people as the last stage in his descent to the Avernus of Nationalism, it appears to me to be only another instance of his strict neutrality, more convincing than mere silence which might cover any hidden change of attitude. His suggestion was that Ulster should be included without option in the territory to be administered by the new government of Ireland, but that it should have at the same time the right of seceding after sufficient time had elapsed " to give the experiment a fair trial and to establish the traditions of good government." He said himself that he regarded the concession which this plan involved for the majority as being far greater than that which the minority would be asked to make, but the fact that he insists on the importance of regarding Ulster as a single unit at once qualifies this and precludes the chance of its acceptance

by the covenanters to whom he mainly addresses his very reasonable arguments; for the province as a whole has been almost equally divided in its opinions on the Home Rule question, and Irishmen expect and Unionists fear that the balance of conversion would be in our favour.

The Ulster question must sooner or later be again a matter of pressing current controversy, and I have no intention of discussing it or Sir Horace Plunkett's proposal for solving it in this book, though I have no doubt that it is to Irishmen of experience in other fields than politics that we shall have to look for the eventual settlement of our difficulties.

In my opinion Sir Horace Plunkett cannot be called a Unionist. His reappearance on the political stage after seven years of silence establishes his neutrality, if not his nationalism. But I would venture to say that he was not a Unionist even when he so far professed to be one as to be a Member of Parliament elected by a majority of Unionist votes. If he was a Unionist at all it was of that rare type which, while recognizing the indisputable nationality of Ireland, has so little fear of its absorption or disappearance that the alleged material advantages of Union with England appear more desirable than the chances of self-government and the perhaps rather empty

satisfaction of the public recognition of a national entity too self-evident to require any such adventitious assistance.

My views on Sir Horace Plunkett as a politician are necessarily mainly based on the book which he wrote to explain himself to the world. In "Ireland in the New Century" he writes as an avowed Unionist, but it must be remembered that at the time he was a member of Parliament elected in that interest, and without the half-hearted assurances he gives, obviously with his eye on his constituents (who have since consistently elected a Nationalist), the carefully preserved neutrality with which he wrote for the Irish public, his eye this time on possible co-operators, would certainly have been interpreted as an insidious change of political opinion; he would have been branded the snake in the grass of Irish Unionism.

The book, however, is ostensibly written from the Unionist standpoint and has therefore a greater value in the conclusions which he draws of what I may call a pro-Irish nature. It reveals a man who regards Ireland as a country to which his entire energies may worthily be devoted, why and how he tells us further, four years later, in "Noblesse Oblige."

But Sir Horace Plunkett is not, and was not when he wrote "Ireland in the New

Century," a Unionist in the accepted sense of the word. The better Unionist considers Ireland worth working for, but he works as a Bristolian works for Bristol, a Devonian for Devonshire, with a local pride in the place he is, often by chance, connected with ; a keen sense of distinctiveness from Englishmen may exist, but it is no stronger than the Yorkshireman's attitude to the southern counties of England. Now Sir Horace Plunkett's standpoint has always been in marked contrast with that of orthodox Unionists and has made him suspect with them almost as much as with the other party, who have consistently and illogically opposed his policy on the grounds that his real object was to draw a red herring across the track of the Home Rule Movement, and so kill finally the national aspirations of the country. In Ireland no one believes in sincere neutrality, and so no one has taken Sir Horace Plunkett seriously as a politician. His very detached impartiality, however, appears to me to give him a position as a statesman which none of our recognized politicians can claim; and I fancy that he only requires to extend the sense of compromise, which he is able to exercise in considering public affairs in Ireland, to his own ideas, to make this the view of the Irish public.

If he was not a Unionist in 1904, neither

was he a Nationalist. I do not regard the blows he deals in his book at the Irish Party as evidence in this respect any more than his treatment of the Unionists, whom he hits hard enough. He quotes the letters he received from the three party leaders at the time of the Recess Committee, and he counts Col. Saunderson's attitude as more *bête* than Mr. McCarthy's, and Mr. Redmond's as reasonable. It is true, I believe, that his book was shorn of its wit and its best writing before it appeared in public, by friends anxious that he should not commit himself to any indiscretion, but its very inopportune tactlessness convinces me that it must have been a true reflection of his mind, dulled somewhat perhaps by ruthless revision, and encourages me to use it as a text-book in considering the political side of his career.

In 1904 Sir Horace Plunkett had in him the makings of a Nationalist statesman; I use this word Nationalist in its widest sense, almost as a synonym for Irish. Nothing he has said or done since then has failed to bear out this view. He is a firm believer in the distinct nationality of Ireland; he recognizes the importance of our history and our past relations with England in arriving at conclusions about the present condition of our country; he emphasizes constantly "the wide difference of tempera-

ment and mental outlook" between the two races; he speaks repeatedly of the Irish "Nation," distinguishes always between Irish and British, and adopts an attitude of gentle sarcasm to the English which would be impossible to a true Irish Unionist.

He shows sympathy with the Gaelic ideal which, though it does not necessarily preclude him from holding the political opinions of a Unionist, at least qualifies him to be an Irishman in the true sense. I cannot, however, refrain from commenting here on the statement he makes, in common with far less clear-seeing men than himself, that, with a few brilliant exceptions, the Irish have created nothing in literature and art. Even to English literature Ireland has contributed Swift, Goldsmith, Berkeley, Sterne, Sheridan, Mitchell, and Burke and a dozen such, and to-day holds as high a place as any European nation in literature and in the theatre. Sir Horace Plunkett forgets, too, that the Irish people were in the past not alone denied education but spoke a language which is only now coming into its own again as a literary medium: it would be as reasonable to expect Bohemian masterpieces in German. Sir Horace Plunkett is in sympathy with the Gaelic movement, but he is unfortunately as yet untouched by the Gaelic spirit. He makes another mis-

take, I think, however much he may sweeten the pill by acknowledging different virtues in the people of the other three provinces, in laying stress on the thrift and industrial achievements of the Ulster Protestants. He forgets that the anti-Irish industrial legislation of the eighteenth century was largely set off in Ulster by the establishment of the linen industry and that the farmers, for their part, not belonging to the native Irish population, were less harassed by the evils of landlordism and possessed the Ulster tenant-right undisputed, while the remainder of the country was dissipating its energies in fighting for its recognition in Munster, Connacht and Leinster. But if Sir Horace Plunkett exhibits a slight obscurity of vision occasionally it is rather through excess of labour on behalf of Ireland than because he has not worked at all. All his energies have been devoted to the reconstruction of agricultural and industrial Ireland, and our quarrel should be not with his want of sympathy but with his want of time. He has been the most efficient worker for national progress we have had in Ireland. He has established the Department of Agriculture, for whose present activities, or inactivity, he cannot be regarded as in any way responsible; he has been primarily responsible for the introduction of co-operative methods, universally

recognized as essential to agricultural nations, into this country; he has given a lead to his class, and no class ever stood in greater need of a wise leader in any country.

"The nearer a man gets to the people," he says, "the further he gets from the Irish Unionist leaders." Is the converse true also? Sir Horace Plunkett has got further and further from the Unionist leaders; has he at the same time got nearer to the people? I think so. He was born in a class whose prejudices are hard to shake off. It takes much courage for a man in his position and surrounded by his environment to go further than he has gone, and it would involve a risk to his work for the unity of the country not lightly to be undertaken. The people of Ireland have no cause to mistrust Sir Horace Plunkett; let them quarrel not with him but with those of his class who refuse to respond to his lead.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUPER-NEGATIVES

"It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." Rich or poor, the man of social standing in this country is handicapped from his boyhood, and, however great his opportunities, the likelihood of his being a good Irishman is remote.

I am a member of several clubs. It is seldom that I make any use of the privileges one of them has to offer, yet, without any definite reason, I continue to pay a considerable sum of money annually for the right of looking at a railway guide or eating a sandwich two or three times a year within its walls. The last time was the occasion of a big Feis. "Hullo," was the only greeting I met, "are you here for this bloody Fesh?" Our conversation was brief, but that opening remark stands as an example, if perhaps rather an extreme one, of the upper-class attitude towards Irish-Ireland. It is obvious to me that I am heartily despised for being

an Irish-Irelander. If this attitude would appear unnatural and abnormal on the part of men of Irish family, it is a quite natural point of view for an Anglo-Irishman; and common self-interest, a common cause and constant intermarriage have obliterated all race distinction in the Irish gentry. The Protestant majority, who never quite know whether to despise or pity the misguided priest-ridden Irish people, pardon the Catholic faith in the few survivors of their class who still profess it, overlooking it as some inherent misfortune, much as they would overlook a squint or a short leg. I say the Anglo-Irish attitude is perfectly natural, for the Englishman whose lot is cast in India or the Straits has no part with the natives, and he sees no reason why he should in Ireland either. It is the simple and obvious result of moral and political tendencies and lop-sided education: the result of Irish History.

The composition of a county club, in other words the male section of "Society," in a remote county is remarkable. It touches the very low water-mark of civilization, for it is totally devoid of ideas of even the most rudimentary description. It is lower than the lowest city slum, for it has not the incentive of keeping body and soul together by work, and it possesses at the same time the unrealized responsibilities of

education and property. The energy of the select gentlemen whose families often date back no farther than a grabbing lawyer of the encumbered estates times, is mainly exercised in swallowing whiskey and soda, their intellect in playing bridge and discussing in an arrogant and domineering tone the inferiority and moral defects of the mere Irish. As I write this so many exceptions among the country gentlemen I know occur to my mind that I feel that I am writing unfairly. Yet, as a whole, the class can only be spoken of in negatives.* They take no part in the life of the country or in its development, political, moral and industrial; they have no sympathy with the people, do not recognize the responsibilities of class and property, and so have nothing in common with the other classes; they are without culture, without ideals, without occupation (except rent-collecting by proxy and a little grazing) and without influence. In a word, they are the super-negative. The preposterous figures of Lever's novels still exist in abundance; but they are less grotesque now because less

* A great number of country gentlemen, of course, while in no way identifying themselves with the national side of Irish life, cannot nevertheless be included in this unfavourable generalization, for they are keen horsemen and often keen farmers. It would be absurd to dismiss such men as drones; but the more work a man is doing in the country the less he is likely to frequent a country club.

ostentatious, they are quieter because they are poorer and have at the same time forfeited their position as the governing class. Their stubbornness and incompetence, which seems to have changed little since the time of the "County Surveys," has deprived them of their proper position and of the rights they should exercise, and the class that has superseded them, instead of coalescing with them in local government as it has in more normal states, is in many ways carrying on their bad tradition, having no other example to follow.

The one positive quality the Irish gentry possess is courage. They never have been funks or Falstaffs, and if proof were needed that they are not now, their part in the European War would give it. They have always shown courage in fighting their tenantry. They were often hard and unjust, but they seldom showed the white feather. The very occasion of this quality of pluck is the chief cause of their anti-Irish attitude now. If the Land League gave an impetus to the Home Rule cause among the farmers it stiffened at the same time the opposition of the property owners, and imparted to it a bitterness not to be wiped out in a generation, nor is it sweetened by the recollection of defeat. The Irish gentry are anti-Irish, not because they are the descendants of Elizabeth's planters and Cromwell's soldiery,

not because they became Protestants to save their estates, but because the ascendancy to which they had become accustomed is broken and the " Common People " have triumphed. Of course they have triumphed: people in Ireland forget that this is the twentieth century. I do not think it would make any difference whether the people use their new-found power wisely or unwisely: the man who is doomed is a bad forgiver and often hates a generous enemy more than a hard one.

The Irish gentry are constantly being offered a last chance. Fortunately we have some dozens of righteous men in our Sodom and Gomorrah and these will save their fellows, for the good one man does counteracts the drift of many. Sir Horace Plunkett offers them the co-operative movement as a field in which to win by effort the place they no longer hold by right. They are contemptuous of the Gaelic League with its attempts to revive the " decaying jargon of a peasant hinterland "; they are amused by the industrial movement and its attempt to compete in Ireland with the established trade of England. " What good are these things? " they say, adopting the all-prevalent commercial view of life, though they would be the last to acknowledge such an attitude. But quite a number seem to be co-operators. Though this does not neces-

sarily mean the dawn of an ideal—even an aim—in an aimless class, at least it necessitates some effort and a breaking away from self, it brings two warring classes together, and gives our gentry a right to recognition as a class in Ireland. A man who joins the I.A.O.S. ceases to be an Uitlander. Every sane Nationalist wishes sincerely for an efficient upper class and loathes the attitude of frenzied partisans in this matter of the I.A.O.S. The brains of the Irish gentry cannot be entirely atrophied, and there must be many potential Dunravens, Cuffes and Monteagles among them.

Certainly their point of view is becoming less myopic. An ex-landlord of my acquaintance, living some way from any village, set up a shop a few years ago in his yard. The shop is successful and he has not been ostracized by snobbish neighbours. I do not recommend shopkeeping to the landlord class in a general way, but I recommend activity, anything but mere drift. The fact is, I honestly believe that the gentry as a whole, except in the rural backwaters I had in my mind when I began this chapter, are waking up. The instinct of self-preservation has quickened them now, as it did their Church after 1865.

Except in the backwaters again, they seem to be fairly equally divided in their opinion as to the right course for them to

adopt when Home Rule is actually established. Some, like the "die-hard backwoodsmen," are determined to skulk in the background, doing all they can in an unobtrusive way to create difficulties, gloating over every little hitch that occurs in the first stages of self-government; a few (shall I call them Unionist-Sinn Feiners?) threaten to migrate to France or America, casting off from their feet the dust of an "England" that has treated them, her faithful garrison, so shamefully; and some have independence or wisdom enough to say that though they will fight to the last for the Union, once it is dissolved they will throw in their lot unreservedly with the new Ireland.

These last are the ones that are awakening. If they really do awake and identify themselves with the work that is being done in the country (and that some of them are doing so in more ways than one I shall show in a later chapter) whatever form of government we have, it is only a matter of time before they will automatically identify themselves with the country itself, not as a glorified shire but as an integral country, and will become Irishmen rather than West Britons.

The Irish gentry, of whom we must not forget that a fair proportion are of native Irish descent, will lead Ireland as soon as they learn the meaning of the word "work."

CHAPTER V

THE IRISH AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION SOCIETY AND ITS AIMS

I MAKE no apology to those in close touch with the I.A.O.S. for this chapter, which they can skip without missing anything they are not already familiar with. My own attempts to write a short sketch of the aims and scope of the Society have only convinced me that it is impossible to put them before such of the public as do not understand them more simply or more clearly than Sir Horace Plunkett has himself done in the first of the I.A.O.S. leaflets. I have myself, as a member of an Agricultural Society Committee, sufficient knowledge of the working of the I.A.O.S. to know that I am not quoting blindly but reproducing words of bracing common sense, and I have certainly no leaning towards Unionism to distort my vision or to make me wish to praise unduly any attempt to weaken the sense of Irish nationality by drawing a red herring across the track.

This is the leaflet :—

"I wish to bring before you as briefly as possible the aims and objects of the Irish

Agricultural Organization Society, in order that you may be able to decide for yourselves whether you ought to avail yourselves of the advantages which it offers you.

"This Society is neither sectarian nor political. It consists of Roman Catholics and Protestants, Nationalists and Unionists. Among those who serve on its Committee are to be found three Roman Catholic priests, two Protestant clergymen, and the son of a Protestant Archbishop, landlords and tenant-farmers.

"You may well wonder what motive has brought together this strange assembly. The explanation is simple. These farmers, business-men, and clergymen, differing in everything else, are one in this, they are Irishmen all, and fond of Ireland. They have carefully studied Ireland's depressed condition, and they are persuaded they have found a means of bringing about a better state of things in the country. They take it for granted that the welfare of Ireland depends mainly upon the welfare of the Irish farmer. To make Ireland prosperous many things will have to be done, many industries promoted; but the first thing to be done is to improve the farmer's condition. And this improvement, they are persuaded, can be, and is being, brought about by the farmers themselves uniting to improve the methods of their

industry, as all the prosperous farmers of the world have done, or are doing.

"It used to be said that landlordism was the only difficulty with which the Irish farmer had to contend. I think it can be proved that if all rent were abolished in Ireland to-morrow the chief difficulties of the Irish farmer would remain what they are. It would not raise the price of anything the farmer has to sell, or increase the produce of an acre of his land; and without higher prices or more produce to sell, it will always be a struggle to make ends meet, no matter on what terms he holds his land. There is, however, no reason why the I.A.O.S. should deal with the relations between landlord and tenant. There are others in plenty to look after this question. I will only ask you to reflect what landlordism was and what it is, and I think you will come to the conclusion that if this is all that is wrong, you ought to be getting prosperous by leaps and bounds. Your very existence is threatened by circumstances of which you have little knowledge, and over which you have, at present, no control.

"You will see what I mean if you think for a moment of the changes which have come over the industry in which you are engaged, even in the last quarter of a century. Before then new countries with vast tracts of virgin soil began to flood the markets

which you supplied with agricultural produce of various kinds. But with all their advantages of cheap and fertile land, you, being nearer to the market, got there quicker, and your products were fresher. Perishable commodities could not come from afar unless pickled, or in some other way preserved. To-day, in a few seconds of time, what you are producing can be ordered from farmers in the uttermost parts of the earth, and, not in months, but in weeks, in comes the produce, just as sweet and fresh as yours. Steam and electricity and processes of refrigeration, overcoming time and distance, have made this great revolution. Nearness to market is of small advantage compared with what it was, indeed it is of no advantage to you with your venerable, but—please forgive me for saying—miserably out-of-date methods of production and distribution.

"And worse remains to be told. It is not only the produce from great tracts of virgin soil which has come into the markets against you. The farmers of the countries just across a narrow sea, who have no natural advantages over you, and have often a far less favourable soil and climate to contend with, have so improved their methods that they compete with you even in your own home markets. Just think of the change which has taken place when the bacon and

butter of Denmark are able to lower in Dublin the price of the once famous products of our own soil. Science is at work in the Danish farm—physical science, which teaches men how nature can yield them a return for their labour which fifty years ago would have been thought impossible, and social science, which teaches men engaged in the same industry how to combine together to help themselves by helping each other. And now the Danes and others of our neighbours across the sea are able to turn out their agricultural produce in better condition than before, and with half the cost. Against these competitors we cannot hope to stand unless we imitate their methods.

"I have said enough to set you thinking, and the more you think, the more you will see for yourselves how completely the times have changed. Indeed, the only thing about your industry which remains the same is your method of conducting it. You must change with the times or go to the wall. The I.A.O.S. has learned from the teachings of foreign countries how you must change, and they ask your support for a national effort to hasten this necessary revolution in Ireland.

"Let us then lay down two fundamental principles of this movement, which must be clearly understood before any progress can be made. The first is that the salvation of

your industry must come from yourselves, and yourselves alone; the second is, that you cannot effect the desired improvement as individuals. The work to be done can only be accomplished by a united effort, or, in other words, by agricultural co-operation. Under modern economic conditions, combination has been found necessary to the success of every industry. Isolated action no longer pays. You will find that those engaged in every industry which is still profitable join together to protect and advance its interests. The British and Irish farmers are amongst the last to learn this lesson. The Irish farmers are, however, learning it fast. At the time I write, about 900 Co-operative Dairying, Agricultural, and Banking Societies scattered throughout Ireland show that it is no longer necessary to argue that a system of combination which farmers all over the world have found to be to their advantage, is equally to your advantage, and equally applicable to every branch of Irish farming.

"I will now set before you some of the improvements which individual farmers cannot accomplish, but which are easy of accomplishment when farmers join together. A well-organized Association of farmers improves the conditions of the farming industry in five main directions:—

"1. It enables them to own and use

jointly expensive machinery which could not be owned generally by individuals. It gives the members the use and all the profits of the latest appliance for the manufacture of butter and other milk products. In Denmark half the bacon factories are owned and worked by co-operative societies of farmers. It will be able to develop through the Irish societies, the poultry and egg trade, which all efforts of individuals have failed to accomplish. It lowers the cost of production for its members in many ways. It obtains for them seeds, manures, feeding stuffs, implements, and general farm requisites, of the guaranteed quality and at the lowest cost.

"2. The Association can exercise some control, in the farmers' interest, over the marketing of live-stock and produce. It can get these commodities carried at a lower rate to the markets, and in much better condition. You all know how carrying companies favour foreign produce as against yours. A radical reform in the carriage of agricultural produce is urgently needed. But you will not obtain redress until the producers are organized into a powerful combination. I may add that even then you will have to bulk your consignments, as your foreign competitors do. In short, if you were organized as they are, you would be served as well.

"3. Similarly, when the market is reached, if you are associated together, you can have your goods sold by your own agents, in your own interest, and thereby you would save to yourselves many of those middle profits which represent the astonishing difference between what the producer gets and the consumer pays.

"4. It has been proved that by co-operation the farmer can borrow money at a much lower rate of interest than he has to pay when borrowing individually; and, what is also very important, he could have the loan made for a sufficiently long term to enable him to repay it out of the profits earned by the application of the loan itself.

"5. Lastly—and this is the greatest advantage of all—when you learn how to work together to do the things I have sketched above, you will find that, by exchange of ideas among yourselves, by friendly discussion and mutual help, you will become better farmers, better business-men, and, as you will be building up the country on the surest of foundations, better Irishmen.

"Now, here are five great purposes to be effected by the movement which I am asking you to join. I need hardly tell you that a great deal of thought and study will be required before you can accomplish them all, or even do any one of them well. But

my object in addressing you will be gained if I have persuaded you that these things must be done if we are to save what has almost come to be our single industry; and, furthermore, that these things can only be done by yourselves, not acting separately, but all pulling together.

"And now I come to the actual work of the I.A.O.S., and must explain why its services are needed by you, although, as I have told you, it calls upon you to do all these things for yourselves. When a body of farmers in any parish have made up their minds that they have got to join together for any of the purposes I have described the first question they naturally ask is—How are we to set about it?

"Of course it is essential that you should learn to trust each other, and take my word for it, before you have gone very far in the practice of co-operation, you will find that mutual confidence pays. Till now you have always managed your own affairs, without seeking to interfere with your neighbours' business, nor allowing them to interfere with yours. And you are not unnaturally shy of embarking upon an undertaking the management of which you will have to share with others. You are quite right to be cautious. Before you consent to join any business association you must be satisfied that the rules by which all the

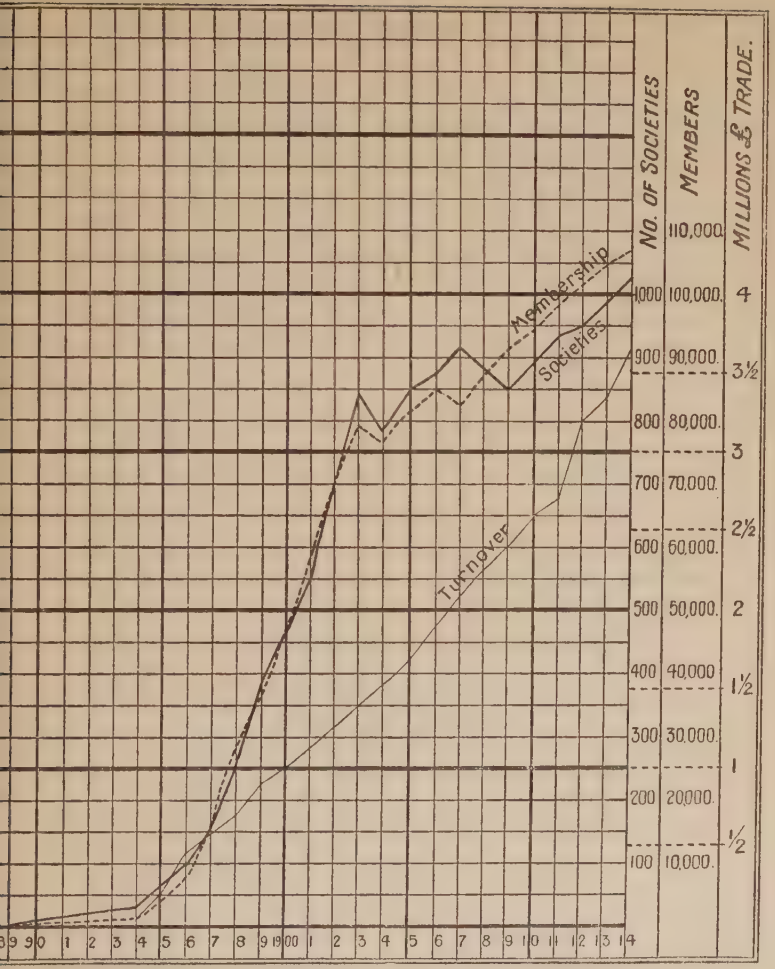
members are to be bound will make it certain that the responsibilities, the risk, and the profits of the business to be transacted will be equitably divided between all the participants. It would be a long time before you could puzzle out such rules for yourselves. It would be ruinous to begin a co-operative enterprise without a thorough understanding of the principles and rules of co-operation. But the I.A.O.S. has exhaustively studied the constitution and procedure of successful farmers' combination in other countries, and has organized many successful farmers' combinations in Ireland. It is ready to send down competent organisers to explain the whole system to you, as soon as you really desire our assistance. Besides this, it will send you printed information upon the method of forming a society, and also pamphlets dealing in detail with the many subjects which I have touched lightly upon in this sketch, which is intended only to show you how others are making agriculture pay, and how you can do the same. You now see the part the I.A.O.S. is ready to play in this work of national regeneration. It is for you to say whether you are ready to play your part.

"You may be told that the success of the foreign producer over his Irish rival is due not to methods of combinations, but to Government assistance. The truth is, it is

due to both these things, and to the first more than to the second. It is quite true that in many of the countries whose competition presses severely upon us, State aid to the farming industry has in the past been in strange contrast with its utter neglect by our own Government. But the Irish farmers have now a properly equipped and endowed Department of Agriculture and Industries for Ireland, manned by Irishmen, which is prepared to give you instruction and aid wherever it can usefully be imparted, and wherever your own unaided efforts would fail to effect the necessary reform.

"In conclusion, let me tell you plainly that if you join the movement which the I.A.O.S. is promoting, although the benefits are sure, they will not come all at once, or without great efforts and some sacrifices on your part. On the other hand, the benefits are not only of the substantial kind. Everyone who has studied the effect of agricultural co-operation all over the world, as we have studied it, knows how the mere fact of men meeting together and working together to improve the business of their lives not only adds to their comfort and prosperity, but leads to an all-round social amelioration, and materially adds to the enjoyment of life, which nowadays, Heaven knows, is dreary enough on an Irish farm."

In a word the I.A.O.S. aims at giving



PROGRESS OF THE MOVEMENT

the farmer his proper status as a manufacturer.

I shall have occasion throughout the rest of this book to refer to the I.A.O.S. in its various aspects as a factor in present-day Irish life. This is a chapter of facts and statistics, and it is enough in it to show by means of a diagram taken from the "Irish Homestead" the actual progress of the movement. It is a big achievement unquestionably, but it is still far from completion. At least as many farmers have still to be persuaded to help themselves as have already become co-operators, for it must not be forgotten that, though technically and in the main correct, the figures I have reproduced include the co-operative "slackers," a variable number and one impossible to estimate with accuracy.

CHAPTER VI

BED-ROCK

Our nearest approach to a National Anthem, "A Nation Once Again," is sung to a fine air. It is not, perhaps, as fitting or as beautiful as some others, but still it is not discreditable to us. But the words are discreditable; they beg the question, for we are a nation still, whatever our form or source of government. It is folly to limit nationhood to a statute; it narrows us to a mere political ideal and tends to make us neglect the essence of nationality for the show of it.

Ireland generates in men's souls the passion of patriotism; the ideals we feel half unconsciously within us are national, albeit we breed axe-grinders who play on our undisciplined enthusiasm and stultify our unguided efforts. Ireland stimulates us to fight for her as a Motherland, and in spite of a climate generally supposed to be enervating and a public spirit emasculated by past oppressions, the central force remains, even if each successive movement to which it gives birth may pine away. Though it is often counted a sin, we cherish a memory

of the past—what nation does not? We are beginning as a people to cherish it with pride, as our ancient history becomes more widely known. As to our wrongs, it is for us in the light of recent events,* I think, to forgive them; but, while we should not exaggerate or harp on them, we cannot forget them yet; as Sir Horace Plunkett suggested in "Ireland and the New Century," it is for Ireland to forgive those wrongs, but for England to remember them. The penal laws, the ascendancy system, the Union, with its anti-Irish "National" Schools, its "West Briton" ideals, these are the causes, rather than temperamental inefficiency, of that *national* incompetency of ours which our enemies ascribe so freely to us: we have never been allowed to grow up as a nation, we are as seed sown upon barren land. This said, for my part, I feel no grievance now. I believe England has begun to recognize us as a nation—she always recognized us as "natives"—and that she will not this time play us false. Her gigantic complacency and self-sufficiency may no longer exist to the same extent as an enemy of our cause: she has been tried in the European fire and has proved worthy of respect.

* I must remind the reader that this was written before the Rebellion. Martial law, with its astounding consequences, was then unthought of.

But the ignorance of the English public remains. Chancing to be shaved recently in London, I conversed with the barber (he was his own master) on the war and from that we came to the subject of languages. "I know no language but Irish and English," I said.—"How Irish?" he asked. "I never knew there was an Irish language, I know you have a peculiar accent, the same as north-countrymen or people from distant parts of England."—"Oh yes," I said, "we have an Irish language, and we had a civilization, too, when the people of England were still dressed in skins."—"Go h-on," was his comment.

I happened to have an Irish letter in my pocket, so in a stropping interval, I showed it to him as proof.

"That's Greek, I bet," said he, after looking at it for a moment.

"People don't write letters in ancient Greek nowadays," I answered.

"Well I never," said he. Then seemingly convinced he added, "You can understand this desire for Home Rule when you get to know a bit of their history." He was satisfied that he now knew Irish history, but he had discovered no great truth, and he is rather typical of the English public.

If we cherish a memory of the past we are not without our hopes for the future too; and perhaps the latter are more interesting,

more profitable and more worthy of us. In Ireland we are in great need of clear thinking. I am going to indulge in some pages of national introspection, self-analysis, not only for the purpose of instructing any readers of this book who are not in close touch with the essentials of Irish life and Irish questions (and Ireland herself contains many such), but also because the very people who have, or think they have, a more intimate knowledge of such subjects, born of a greater interest in them, require to see in perspective, to get at bed-rock, in order to be able to realize the relative values of their particular interests. And I am seeking in this book to arrive at the relative value of Sir Horace Plunkett's work in modern Irish life.

What is the test of nationhood? Innumerable definitions of a nation have been made and I will not embark on another, framed subconsciously, as it would be, to include Ireland within its meaning. I will compare our status with that of other European countries universally recognized as nations.

The most obvious encouragement to the growth of a distinctive nationality is geographical isolation. This we have, and no other comment is needed upon it than Grattan's well-known phrase. Though it is often quoted foreign readers may not

know it : " The channel forbids union ; the ocean forbids separation."

Historically speaking we are a nation. Originally the question of whether the inhabitants of Ireland possessed a distinct nationality did not exist. Springing from a different racial source from their neighbours and affected in no way by the imperial Roman influence, and only to a comparatively small extent by the Norsemen, giving as they did Christianity and learning to much of Northern Europe, and with an elementary civilization and social code of their own, our ancestors were in the early centuries no more to be confused with the Anglo-Saxons than the Italians or Japanese are to-day. Our house is assuredly set upon a sound foundation, but the upper storeys of the edifice are in an indefinite style and harmonize ill with the ground-work. It is idle to speculate on what we might have been had we been allowed to work out our own salvation. Our national development was prevented by English conquest, English policy and the partial occupation of the country by Englishmen. That is why we speak bitterly of anglicization. It is not hostility to the English, a people I would personally admire above any foreigners in the world were they less interfering and " superior "; it is hostility to the doctrine that English ideals and institutions are suitable,

almost indispensable, to all peoples and races, which we feel. It is hostility to the imposition, and the imposition by the most insidious means, of foreign ideals, and it would be as fierce against the Russians or the Germans, had they been our conquerors. Through centuries of war, and later of rebellion, it was a *national* spirit which prompted Irishmen to fight the invader or throw off the yoke of the alien; it was a *national* failing which in turn disrupted those forces. Of course, Irish were often ranged with English against Irish in the early wars, but a similar state of affairs was to be found in every country at an early period, and we may fairly say that the germ of the national idea existed at Clontarf and again in 1641, and also, I think, in the rebellion of Silken Thomas; and this germ would have developed in time into a modern nation as the conception of nationality became more clearly understood by the world, had it not been deliberately destroyed. We have a distinct history, though in later times it is bound up very closely with that of England. It is the history of a people subject, if you will, but not in any way a part of Great Britain. And now in our perpetual struggle for Home Rule the root of all our striving, the force which gives it persistence, is the desire for recognition as a distinct nationality: we want

to be publicly accepted as an integral country (we need not necessarily be outside the British Empire for that), to cease to be in the eyes of the world part of Great Britain; and who can doubt, unless he be blinded by the narrowest of party prejudice, but that Ireland will respond to liberal treatment—not mere half-hearted tentative experiments—as readily as South Africa, where England was at bitter war only fifteen years ago.

The English repressed our national life and stamped out our institutions. The Brehon laws, perhaps the most characteristic of all and the most consistently attacked, were no savage tribal rules, but a carefully thought out system of jurisprudence and a part of the Irish people of mediæval times, and still to some extent ingrained in them. The cleverest stroke of all was the suppression of the Gaelic language which had, till Elizabeth's time at any rate, always absorbed the invader as soon as he settled in the country. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes;* it was not by direct interdiction that English statesmen killed the language, but by the gift to Ireland of "National Schools" —in which, of course, Irish-speaking children were *taught* in English and Irish history was taboo. Yet our language still lives: its re-introduction into the Galltacht synchronizes with its falling away in the Gaeltacht;

but with it we have seen a revival of Gaelic literature and all it stands for; in it we find the embodiment of a national ideal. Even were Gaelic to cease to remain in any way a living language it would remain as a distinctively national possession, more so than in Scotland where Gaelic was never the language of the whole country but of the Highlands and West Lowlands only. And it could be retained as part of our national existence by making it the classical basis of Irish education, as Latin, and to a lesser extent Greek, is the basis of English education, a function it is unquestionably as well able to perform. Indeed, this view is very strongly held by many who have no hopes of saving the Irish language as a spoken tongue, and who are sometimes even out of sympathy with the attempt to do so. They hold that it will not only provide Irish schools with a distinctively national classical education, but that it will so influence the English tongue as spoken and written in Ireland that the Irish idioms and phraseology now commonly used by English speakers will become, not a mere spoken dialect, but a recognized form of literary expression peculiar to Ireland and almost a distinct language of her own. They add that instead of writing in a language spoken by a couple of million people at most, the works of Irishmen in their own language

would be available in the original to an English-speaking population of two hundred millions. These are not my views, but they are worth consideration, I think.

At any rate by the test of language we are still a nation, since Gaelic lives as a spoken tongue and there is a considerable output of Gaelic literature. But language, though perhaps the most important test of nationhood, is not an infallible one. The United States is a case in point. Switzerland, unless we count Romansch, which is in no way national, has no language of her own, but uses the tongues of the three neighbouring powers, yet no one would deny the Swiss their nationality. Belgium has consolidated her nationhood in the present war: she is now recognized as a nation *par excellence*, having suffered as a nation, which Ireland has also done, though with less dramatic violence. French is the language of Belgium; she has Flemish too, it is true, but not in the way we have Gaelic, for Flemish is not the original language of the whole Belgian State, it is not the medium of her literature nor the expression of a civilization peculiar to herself, although the Belgians, recognizing the value of a national language, are now beginning to foster it. As I have said, if a distinct language is not an infallible test of a distinct nationality, it is the greatest

element in preserving it. The Poles are a nation because they have saved their language in the face of odds even greater than we have had to face ; and since I heard the Dublin Jews welcoming the Jewish Belgian refugees on the quays in Yiddish I have almost learnt to feel the same about that scattered people too.

But there is no instance, I think, of a nation which possesses neither a language nor a Government of its own. And since our language has fallen into disuse and our Government is alien, whether friendly or hostile is beside the mark, we are in danger of losing our nationality. This, of course, has been the aim of all English statesmen till Gladstone, and since his time all English Unionists—the "happy English child" ideal, held often by persons of a perfectly benevolent but entirely self-satisfied disposition. This fact also justifies us in striving for self-government at all costs, in remaining impervious to such arguments as exist for the Union, to bribes, to treatises. This is why when we read such an excellent piece of philosophical logic as Mr. Balfour's pamphlet "Home Rule and Nationality" (now probably forgotten, even by himself), our natural comment is that the Irish question is not a proposition in Euclid, since human nature cannot be eliminated.

At the present moment our form of

government is in a state of solution. What will be finally precipitated we do not know. But even under the old *régime* we possessed to a considerable extent separate government without self-government, for apart from government by coercion, which we alone of white peoples in the British Empire enjoyed, we possessed a separate executive to administer laws, from land purchase to dog licences, which, though made in England, were to a very large extent made for Irish consumption only.

We have also, as a nation, retained the Catholic faith, in spite of England's varied attempts to deprive us of it, and it remains a distinctively national asset, for it constitutes a marked contrast between England and Ireland, and every point in which we differ from the English emphasizes our nationality, inasmuch as it is the English (not the French or the Spaniards) who are threatening to absorb us.

We are, thank God, not yet English; nor do I think we are now in danger of becoming so.

Let us agree that Ireland is not English; but how Irish is she? I have often wanted to put myself in the position of an Englishman coming to Ireland and to see Ireland with his eyes; perhaps I should say an intelligent Japanese, since Englishmen come to Ireland laden either with fishing-rods or

preconceived ideas about the country which curtail or distort their vision. To an Irishman Ireland is an integral country, and when he returns from the ends of the earth *via* London he feels the exhilaration of stepping on to his native shore at Kingstown not at Tilbury. I do not know whether an Englishman returning from New York would feel his heart glowing at Queenstown or at Holyhead.

The cosmopolitanism of a world which becomes ever smaller as its explorers discover new continents tends to make all countries more alike, and especially their cities. The traveller disembarking at Kingstown pier would detect nothing Irish in Ireland on his way to Westland Row except perhaps a certain disinclination on the part of the railway officials to hurry; unless he was of an observant nature, in which case he might notice that the railway gauge was a foot or so wider than that he was accustomed to. In Dublin itself he would notice nothing distinctive but outside-cars, bilingual street names and a general air of easy-going metropolitanism among Georgian architecture, wide streets and squares; and he would buy an English newspaper, or the same thing with an Irish name. Of course, if he stayed long enough, he would find in Dublin much that is Irish and in no way English. He would recognize that our national in-

stitutions—our universities, libraries, museums, galleries and societies like the R.D.S. —while sharing with England much that is common to their prototypes all over the world and with the mark of English influence on them here and there, are still distinctively Irish and national, not provincial like those of a town of similar size in England. He would go perhaps to the Abbey Theatre, visit the Dun Emer Guild, see a parade of Irish volunteers, learn that books are published, and whisky and porter, soap and biscuits made in Dublin; would possibly stumble on a copy of *an Claidheamh Soluis* or "New Ireland." He might go to the Horse Show or Punchestown. He might even see Lord Ashbourne or Claud Chevasse in the street, and if he met "Æ" or W. B. Yeats he would probably become all the more conscious by comparison that the average citizen of Dublin is quite satisfied with the Theatre Royal and the "Daily Sketch."

Of course, Dublin is not really English; it has merely a veneer of anglicization. It has not the look of a true English city. And if our traveller went on West or South, he would find a landscape less and less English. Irish farms, as seen from the railway train, do not look as though they had been dusted and swept that morning; cottages have one storey and whitewashed walls; country

houses, except a few of the biggest, possess a uniform ugliness which almost amounts to a national style in architecture, and taken in conjunction with their surroundings, become pleasing to the eye; ricks of turf are everywhere; hay is left in the fields till September in big tramp-cocks (causing the uninitiated to pity the farmers' misfortunes); old women abound in ass-carts, and in some places girls still wear shawls and men bawneens and black hats of a clerical cut; large numbers of semi-military police and cattle-jobbers, large quantities of golden blossomed furze on every side, inevitable blue mountains on the horizon: such is the impression he probably gets of Ireland at first sight. Later on he will find many lichen-covered ruins, many interesting customs and observances among the country people, with whom he will become very quickly acquainted. But when he goes away he will know nothing about the people of Ireland: how far they are touched by the ideals which inspire some of their leaders or see through the schemes which are actuating others, how they regard the vital questions of the country, or what they think of the Gaelic League, Co-operation, even Home Rule itself. Nobody knows, they themselves least of all. But though their faith in the inviolable nationality of Ireland may be weakened by prosperity

and their energy drained by a continued lack of political responsibility, I am certain that the light of nationality glows deeply in them yet—the slumbering embers of the forge fire want but a blast of the bellows to burst into a white hot flame.

CHAPTER VII

IDEALS AND FORCES IN IRELAND

In every nation the mass of the people is subject to enthusiasms but without wide ideals. When I am considering the ideals which stimulate Irishmen to work for Ireland I imply in no way that they are general, but only that they command a certain following and are capable at times of augmenting that following to something approaching national dimensions, when critical circumstances or a chance catch-word happen to stir up the temporary enthusiasm of the populace.

Perhaps it is untrue to suggest that no ideals are general, for, though it may be imperfectly realized, the ideal of the freedom of self-government is general. As a matter of fact, I think it is ingrained in the people, and it is, of course, more likely than other ideals to be kept alive, because it excites a wide opposition and provides suitable shibboleths and is itself, in a general way, easy of comprehension. The English did and might govern us worse than they do. In some ways they govern us well. But as the youth grown man resents the parental

apron strings, too long binding him, and longs for the freedom and responsibility of individuality, however hard the road he has to face alone, so, I conceive, does Ireland long for independence, for recognized nationhood, to attain her majority in the community of modern nations who once held a place of honour among the earlier peoples. That the flame still burns, and burns brightly, I honestly believe. Not violently, perhaps, as in days past, when there were more immediate crying grievances to remove, more obvious material benefits to follow. It is, as I have said, but the difference between the blacksmith's fire when the bellows are working and when they are at rest. Before the war partisans and politicians thought to make capital out of the alleged apathy of Ireland as a whole about Home Rule—a niggardly enough Home Rule, be it remembered, very different from the broad statesmanlike measure which South Africa obtained, though she too had her acute Ulster question, her "rank disloyalty." Good as the point would seem, it is capable of explanation. We were then on the eve of success (and surely we are not to believe that the England who fights a bloody war ostensibly to uphold a treaty will again break her word with Ireland). We are possibly an excitable people individually, but as a nation we are not

emotional and we had no further need of fuss or agitation. So China used Dr. Sun Yat Sen and discarded him. But the Unionists of Ulster once passive while we worked, though active enough in taking advantage of the benefits we won — the grandiloquent first person requires an apology from one who was then a babe or less —had and have had according to their lights as definite a need for action as the rest of the country had thirty or forty years ago. The apathy of the peasantry, for I am thinking rather of rural Ireland, is largely ignorance, too. The flame burns, but it is not a conscious flame. The peasant mind, complex though it may be in smaller affairs, is simple enough to believe that England and Ireland are as unlike one another as ever. For what do the firemen in the stokehold know of the ship's course, the islands she passes, the vessels she meets, beyond a vague understanding that the sea is calm or rough according as the floor they stand on is steady or swaying? Only the men on deck can see the incidents and beauties of the voyage, only those on the bridge and in the crow's-nest its dangers.

I think it is right to say that Home Rule is an ideal, for liberty is an ideal, and most Home Rulers assert that they would rather be badly governed by their own people than well by outsiders; for, as Sir Henry

Campbell-Bannerman said, "good government is no substitute for self-government," which is a good instance of a catchword. At the same time, though Home Rule is in a general way an ideal, there is no doubt that most people regard it as a means to an end, each having his own ideal in view, which he hopes to see advanced under a new *régime*.

For my part, I count self-government as a sub-ideal, though likely to be very useful to promote many things I desire. I regard the preservation of Irish nationality as the great aim to be worked for, and I am at one in principle if not always in method with all Irishmen whose ideals are essentially Irish and make for the strengthening of Irish nationality. Therein lies the strength of the Home Rule force: it is the rallying-point of each idealist and provides him with a starting-place for the working out of his own particular interest. We cannot estimate the strength of an ideal simply by the number of its apparent adherents. If we could, we should have to say at once that the ideal embodied in the I.A.O.S. is more potent than that expressed in the Gaelic League, by the amount by which its 100,000 members exceeds the roll of Gaelic Leaguers; which would be manifestly absurd, since many farmers co-operate from purely commercial motives and have no

knowledge of the ideas which enlighten the movement they are numbered as supporting (how many members of co-operative societies have read "Æ's" "Co-operation and Nationality"?*); but no one is a Gaelic Leaguer for commercial purposes, though many are Gaels who do not actually belong to the Gaelic League.

I have touched in an earlier chapter on the ideals of the co-operative leaders, ideals which, as far as I can see from my standpoint as a committee man of a small agricultural society, are just beginning to take root in the bulk of the members of the I.A.O.S. Broadly the ideal is to substitute for stagnation in rural Ireland a civilization suited to a rural community. It could not be more admirably expressed than in "Æ's" book which I mentioned above and in the pamphlet on the United Irishwomen edited by Father Finlay, and partly written by Sir Horace Plunkett.

Now there is an essential difference between the co-operative movement and the Gaelic movement. Both aim at instilling an ideal and creating a new and more perfect order of things; but while the I.A.O.S. appeals first to the ordinary business intelligence of the people and allows the ideals which it stands for to permeate

* Out of print, but partially reprinted in "Imaginations and Reveries."

through its members afterwards, the Gaelic League offers nothing whatever of any value according to the accepted British standards, which it must be admitted are those of most of the world, including the majority of Irishmen. In fact the Gaelic League is frankly idealist; it appeals to the people to support an ideal and offers in exchange, unless we count the occasional allurement of a hurling match, not profits but hard work and—nationality.

The Industrial Revival, the third force in Ireland which is genuinely national, embodies an ideal also. Although pre-eminently successful as hucksters and tough in bargaining, the Irish people have never been and are not really commercially inclined. I know a man who quite honestly regards a factory chimney as more beautiful than a round tower, and no doubt many support the industrial revival because they think it will eventually transform Ireland into a series of Belfasts, as England is a series of Sheffields. A small farmer said to me not long ago, "I wish to God it was all a Belfast from north to south," but he was a very "scattered" Protestant and his only reading was religious news as disseminated from that city, so perhaps he is hardly a case in point. Of course there is much in this industrial movement which is not idealism. At the same time its success is entirely

due to the fact that Ireland contains a very large number of hard-headed idealists. Idealists are supposed to be unpractical. The prevalence of this idea is another instance of the prevalence of English ideas. The English, as has been pointed out before, are a hysterical nation; they are divided into two classes: utterly unimaginative and mercenary citizens, who when roused to enthusiasm are roused to hysteria, and artists of one kind and another who are usually centred in themselves. England and the British Empire are too immense to stimulate ideals in peace time —the concentration of war has given them the opportunity of showing that they are not so mildewed as the world supposed. But Ireland is a small country and Irishmen are to some extent gifted with imagination. It is therefore possible to have an industrial revival the keynote of which is not self-interest.

There is less definite opposition to the industrial movement than to the other two because it is easier of comprehension by an anglicized people; but at the same time the very fact that so much of Ireland is anglicized in ideas in turn works against this movement, for there is an accepted view that Ireland produces nothing good except alcoholic drinks, soldiers and horses, while England can hold her own in every-

thing but music and waiters; and Irish manufacture is therefore looked at askance. This view is quite unjust, though the methods of some Irish manufacturers make it excusable. In point of fact, almost everything one wants is made in Ireland and made well. It is possible, with such obvious exceptions as sugar and tea and various raw materials, to lead your daily life without using anything non-Irish: Irish food does not mean inevitable indigestion, Irish furniture backache and insomnia, nor Irish clothes ridicule. Those are the everyday necessities of life. Specialized manufactures in which trade and art meet are carried on in Ireland, too. The rugs and carpets made by the Kildare people and the Dun Emer Guild are works of art, and the Donegal carpets, if less perfectly designed perhaps, are the work of craftsmen, not of belching factories turning out their stuff by the mile. I might make a catalogue of Irish industrial activities, beginning with soap and working up to stained glass.

It is economically sound to insist on the manufacture of the necessaries of life and the industries arising out of agriculture, a point I shall recur to in my next chapter. But at the same time we must not lose sight of the value of the handicrafts and manufactures in which art and industry meet. There has been in England of late years, as

there has been in Ireland, a tendency towards a reaction, among the élite at least, against what Mr. Robert Eliot, in his "Art and Ireland," describes as tradesman's art, where such and such a style of art can be supplied, where design is scheduled and individuality is submerged. Our so-called national press was vehement in its exhortations to Irish industrialists to seize the opportunity offered by the war of capturing a part of the dislocated world trade, of increasing our exports. As was pointed out in any of our periodicals where thinking is permitted, this was fallacious as a general policy, because our need, now even more than before the war, is to feed and clothe ourselves. But to condemn export as uneconomic until we are self-supporting, though wise in a general way, is foolish if the doctrine be too rigidly interpreted. What is true of the common things of daily life is untrue of the uncommon. A country which numbers among its industries the production of the artistic embellishments of life, as I may call them, especially a small country and one which, though not necessarily poor, is not a country of rich men, must depend on the custom of the world for its support. It is the individuality as much as the excellence of such things that gives them their value, and the fact that they are the individual and original production of a

single nation makes them at once too expensive to be sustained by a single country and too distinctive to be profitably imitated elsewhere. I am writing in this chapter of ideals which Ireland holds for Irishmen. It would be hard to find in a commercial age a more worthy idea than that of freeing ourselves from the incubus that broods over commerce, of re-introducing art into life not only in its purely decorative and emotional aspect as in painting and sculpture, music and poetry, for pictures and poems are only bought as art by lovers of art, but also in our daily surroundings, in the things which are now bought and sold as articles of commerce, often because they are not produced as anything else. We have an instance in furniture of one which has never really lost its proper position : the cabinet-maker has always been a craftsman, never a mechanic or artisan.

Of the crafts now established in Ireland whose value Sir Horace Plunkett so clearly recognized in starting the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, hand-made lace, embroidery and hand-made rugs and carpets, in which the artist has scope for colour as well as design, are the best known. But, to live, they must largely depend on foreign appreciation. It is surely a national success that this should be so. Some men feel a glow of patriotism at the

omnipresence in the world of Guinness's Dublin stout and Belfast linen. How much easier it is to feel the glow for an art of world-wide importance. Waterford glass had it, Limerick lace still has it, and I think the work of Dun Emer Guild and Miss Purser's stained glass are both worthy of it to-day.

And as to art itself, we have our artists, but economics and the attraction of London rob us of much of our best.

It is, however, in spite of economics that the industrial movement has succeeded, for it has undoubtedly had a considerable success. The capital, or, what comes to the same thing, the courage to invest it in Irish concerns on the part of those who possessed it, was lacking. Credit was not good; industrial enterprise, as well as industrial experience, was at a low ebb. In spite of that Irish industries, using the word in a wide sense, are not declining. Shifty shopkeepers still inform their customers that the things they ask for are not made in Ireland, or that they are badly made. Usually but not always their statements are untrue. Of course all Irish manufacture is not good. I make a rule, for myself, to insist on Irish goods. If after a fair trial I find them inferior or unreasonably dear I buy English, American or French substitutes, in fact whatever is given to me. This seems to me a reasonable attitude, and the fact that it is

the attitude of numbers of Irish people who have nothing to gain by it in a commercial sense keeps the Irish manufacturers going, or at least brings them through the trying time before they can "get in" on the market. I was thinking of the necessaries of life, for the moment. As regards the embellishments of life I believe in using everything possible of Irish workmanship, not only because Irish work is good and because it is more interesting and proper to an Irish home than foreign work, but because it needs all the support it can get from those who sympathize with the existence of a national art. Ignorant and unimaginative people in Ireland think of Home Rule as a millennium which is to bring untold commercial prosperity to the country. Being anglicized, I might also say being affected by a pseudo-Americanism, that is the natural direction of their thought. Nowhere in the world are a stiff collar and cuffs so reverenced as here. But I am happy to say that Belfast and Birmingham hold no ideals for people who think and lead in Ireland. Industries we need, but industries suited to our own conditions and not feeble copies of English and American concerns. Although, as I have said, both the necessaries of life and the embellishments are produced in Ireland, still we are essentially a non-industrial nation at present. We have

in fact virgin soil to deal with in this matter, and we can grow what crops we will; we have the barrenness, truly, but not the weeds of another's sowing to deal with. It is clear that if we wish to profit by the lessons we can read in the so-called successful nations, we must avoid the Frankenstein's Monster of commercial and industrial progress. One of our greatest national possessions is the lack of what we are told is our greatest need. If we had the necessary mineral resources I suppose we should cheerfully create conditions which have produced in other countries the slums and the sunlessness of millions of workers' lives. Placed as we are, however, we are not likely to be lost in that bog. What we should aim at is to develop further the industries and crafts we already possess, and to concentrate our attention on handicrafts and on the manufactures which arise naturally in an agricultural country, the manufacturing of our own raw material: bacon curing, linen and cloth making, butter, cheese and jam-making, tanning and so on. These with most of the things we make now, do not necessitate the concentration of enormous masses of people in one place, but provide an opening for the country towns. It is the rural industries which can give employment and save men from sinking to be no more than soulless machines.

The co-operative leaders aim at creating a rural civilization to brighten the drab lives of country people. But if the farmer's and the farm labourer's life is drab with all its varying interests, what of the small townsman's life in Ireland ? Drab, I would say, with streaks of crude magenta here and there. The ideals of the rural reformers are sweeping and aim at a social revolution which will include the country towns. They would offer those parasites their proper place and function in the social organization. They would give them an economic position in relation to industry.

I will devote my next chapter to a more particular consideration of the rural industries, and how they can best be fostered under our modern Irish conditions.

CHAPTER VIII

RURAL INDUSTRY

THERE seems to be a general but subconscious idea that the extent of its industrialism is the criterion of the success of a country in modern times. If industry in its primary sense of creative activity were the hallmark I would agree with this, but industrialism implies something different: it suggests the Black Country of England, the endless, sunless, joyless streets of the South Wales mining towns, the long mechanical hours of dull toil in stuffy factories, the pinched cheeks of slum-bred children. That is what it means for most workmen in England—a successful commercial country which has sacrificed agriculture for industrialism. The surplus country-bred population in England migrates to such conditions; impelled by similar economic forces (in both cases the lure of the unknown has its power, too), our people emigrate to America, where I am convinced they are better off in every sense than in England, and they are also among friends.

But it is exceedingly desirable, both for the Irish nation and for the individual, that

Irishmen should not be obliged to go abroad in such numbers. We have heard much about the reduction in emigration, but it must be remembered that our population is but half what it was and that the low-water mark must eventually be reached when there is nobody left to emigrate. The only remedy for emigration is profitable occupation at home.

Profitable occupation for the surplus population of Ireland means Irish industries on a vastly increased scale, together with more tillage. Unless a state be entirely governed on socialist principles it is likely to be of small practical use to put forward suggestions for the development of industry, since there is little co-ordination in the industrial working of a country, and the launching of new enterprises is entirely the result of individual effort, even if Department aid is sometimes given to help to carry them on.

Fortunately Ireland is not well placed as regards minerals, so that her temptation to try to compete with the great commercial nations in their own sphere is not strong. Under favourable circumstances we might hope to supply our own needs of coal and even iron, but that is all: it would be an ultimate achievement, not a method of rejuvenating our industrial life. No, our very disadvantages are, in fact, our great opportunity: they present us with a way

of creating a nation approaching as near as modern conditions admit to a nation of handicraftsmen, for, since we are not tempted to embark on big industrial concerns, we must establish, foster and develop the small and especially the rural industries, in which there is so much more scope, so much more interest, for the individual.

Agriculture, using the word in its general but incorrect sense of farming (not necessarily tillage), is our main industry. Though the great area it covers and the decentralization of its activities obscure the fact, the farming industry nevertheless gives employment to over two million persons in Ireland and involves a capital of some hundred millions.

The importance of these figures is in their relative, not in their absolute aspect. A capital of a hundred millions is a bagatelle in a country of combines and trusts, but in Ireland it means the complete predominance of the industry controlling it. When thinking of industrial development in Ireland it is well to remember that agriculture is the parent industry, as it should be in a normal healthy country, and to be economically sound we must make it the basis of the industries we hope to build up in the future. I say this, of course, without in any way discounting the importance of the handicrafts to which I referred in the last chapter.

Most of the manufactures arising out of agriculture are to some extent carried on in Ireland: all of them except perhaps linen are capable of very considerable expansion, if the development of manufactures is possible at all. The most obvious are the conversion of wool into clothing and blankets as is being done at Dripsey, Foxford and scores of places, instead of sending it to Bradford; of hides into leather, again instead of exporting the raw material: we have tanneries in Limerick and other places, but they are few enough; of milk into butter and cheese, pigs into bacon and flax into linen, all of which we already do largely; fat sheep and cattle into dead meat instead of reducing them into mere forward stores as we do by exporting them under the present system. This industry is carried on successfully at Wexford by a co-operative society which, besides saving the money which would have otherwise been lost to Ireland by wastage in transit, has had the effect of stimulating tillage—and so employment—in the districts it covers. Such concerns again as Jameson's, Guinness's and Jacob's are native to Ireland, as steel works and coal mines are native to England, even if they import some of their raw material, for that raw material is itself agricultural produce.

The small industries proper to a country like Ireland and most likely to be successful

are in reality branches or extensions of farming as we understand it. We require first to supply our own necessities as farmers —to have to buy less feeding-stuffs, for instance. A few mills for grinding oats, or even crushing them, and for grinding barley would give us a milk producer as good as cotton cake, a pig-fattener which has proved superior to Indian meal: as farmers we have but to grow the crops. By growing vetches, rape and such crops we also save the expenditure and add to the revenue of the nation, which is industry *par excellence*.

The Plunkett House has recently supplemented its unofficial "Irish Homestead," whose circulation is largely due to "Æ's" brilliant leading articles on general subjects, with a quarterly magazine, the name of which is "Better Business." The power even of the daily press in Ireland is not very great, infinitely less than in England, and it is unlikely that a stiff-looking quarterly will have any effect whatever on Irish farmers. None the less the real need of the farmers is for better business.

It is the object of the I.A.O.S. to enable the small farmer to buy and sell to advantage, to command, as he should, the terms proper to a manufacturer. It should be the object of the Department of Agriculture to assist him in the other aspect which makes for better business: economical production.

It has made sporadic attempts to do so, but on lines which did not appeal to the people and which have had little effect. Here again Sir Horace Plunkett has shown himself a man both of wisdom and discrimination: wisdom in that he saw the necessity of practical example; discrimination in that, not being himself a farmer, he chose an agriculturist with imagination to make a practical demonstration.

It is curious that our close connection with America has not given Irish farmers a greater aptitude for up-to-date methods of money-making, but I suppose it is because the spirit of adventure seldom takes our emigrants west of New York, so that they see little of American agriculture. Some of us have not required instruction from America to teach us the value of keeping milk-records, their effect on the annual returns of our butter and ultimately on the quality of our herds. But there are few progressive farmers in any part of Ireland who will not acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Sir Horace Plunkett and Mr. Wibberley. During the three years the experiment lasted almost every Sunday the South-Eastern Railway discharged a cargo from one train after another at Foxrock station, of farmers large and small, who had come from every county in the country to see for themselves the Kilteragh farm, and to hear Mr. Wibber-

ley expounding his ideas on production of farm foods, with the actual practice of them at hand to illustrate his words. The fairy tales which Mr. Wibberley seems to tell in his writings on continuous cropping appear true when one visits Kilteragh. Of course his methods are not applicable in their entirety to all parts of the country. But even with a rainfall of almost fifty inches I have found from my own experience that by modifying them to suit my own circumstances they are practical. In a book whose readers for the most part will be non-farmers it would be out of place to discuss the system of farming which Mr. Wibberley practised at Kilteragh and on the other demesne farms he is looking after. It is however a commentary on what the Department might have been, had Sir Horace Plunkett remained in office, to think of the numbers of farmers who have travelled from Clare and Kerry, from Wexford and Donegal, losing their time and paying their own expenses, to see a new idea put in practice ; and though the Department may claim as a triumph for its bill-posting the increase in the national area of catch crops which they have felt bound to advocate since the war has focused attention on home production, I have no doubt myself that it is the seed sown by the men of Kilteragh which is now bearing fruit. We cannot

have success in industry without some rudimentary knowledge of business. The importation of Scotch and English managers to work out our plans is not an aim in itself, though it is necessary at times in special cases. Before I leave this subject let me say that to contribute to the industrial development of his country every Irish farmer should keep pigs and poultry, not as his wife's perquisite, but as an integral part of his business—managed systematically—and he should grow the food for them on his own farm.

The difficulties of industrial development are lack of capital and the inability to find a suitable market. Yet there is capital in Ireland and food is always in demand. Co-operation is the obvious way out of these difficulties, and it has been the means of surmounting them in the case of hundreds of poultry, creamery and ordinary agricultural societies. In districts where one of the ex-landlord class lives who has been man enough to identify himself with his country and to do something for its sake, he is generally in a position to accomplish the results achieved by co-operation without the dilatoriness of a committee ; to become in effect a sort of benevolent gombeen man. Where the gentry have realized more or less consciously that it is necessary for them to stand in with the people they are already

showing how much they can do towards industrial development in its widest sense. Not only have they the money to patronize and the social position to popularize goods of Irish manufacture, but they have to some extent the capital both to enable them to risk the experiment of new and better methods of farming, and so to put them before the bulk of the farmers in a practical form, and also to set on foot local industrial undertakings of the kind I have said are suitable to the development of this country. The tobacco growing and curing industry is a striking example of this; everywhere we see the larger gentry with sawmills and machinery of all kinds which the ordinary farmer is too poor and the co-operative society committee often too timid to get. Co-operation, which is essential for the successful carrying on of existing industries, is of far less value in starting new ones. People collectively are ready to improve on their method of doing a familiar thing, but it requires much more initiative and daring to take the risk of being a pioneer—more than can be found in the committee of an average co-operative society.

Outside farming proper we have a number of rural industries in which country gentlemen can engage with profit and interest to themselves and immense benefit to the locality. Of course much depends on the

nature of the district in which they live, but, speaking generally, I may mention lime burning, osier growing and basket making, sawmills, corn crushing and grinding mills, the more specialized forms of smith and carpenter's work, fruit and vegetable growing, and tobacco curing, which last, by the way, can only be done on a large scale.

Every industry has, of course, two distinct phases — production and marketing. We require one or two cardinal principles to guide us in thinking out any new departure, to act as the basis to which we can refer each question as it arises. In connection with rural industries let us consider production first. Under this head the essentials are capital, expert knowledge and proper business management. As I have said above, the two most obvious agents of industrial development are the ex-landlord class and the co-operative societies, and both of these are exposed to dangers and liable to pitfalls: the richer gentry who have capital and can afford to pay for expert knowledge are apt to regard industrial development in too amateur and sentimental a way: their main object is to provide local employment and to have the personal satisfaction of hearing the hum of industry and feeling that it is due to them. I am far from deriding a spirit which is

eminently commendable and all too rare in our country, but I submit that its results are economically unsound and the mainspring is lacking, for the continuance of their work is dependent upon their personal attitude: they are not the authors, they are the thing itself. It is the rich man's hobby, for he is not bound to make a reasonable interest on his money, and the poorer man of the same class dare not risk his money, and so invests it outside the country. Irish rural industries must be on a business footing; they are not likely to be successful unless their originators have themselves a knowledge and a taste for business and have also the capacity for selecting men of the right type to assist them. In a different way co-operative societies are less likely to succeed. Apart from the apathy and over-caution of rural committees (of course there are exceptional committees as there are exceptional gentry), they have the disability of working not an improved form of an established business, but an entirely new venture, on an overdraft, with the consequent restrictions as to manager's salary and every outlay; they are hampered on every side in the expense of finding markets as much as in the production itself, for the markets are not ready-made as they are in the case of creameries and the present activities of co-operative societies.

Again, the industrial pursuits I have mentioned require paid labour in manufacture; the majority are not susceptible of being produced mainly at home as is the milk for butter and cheese, and they require as a rule, if they are to pay, to cover larger areas than those usual or suitable for co-operative societies, which if too widespread lose, of course, their essential characteristics and value.

Rural industries make personal relations between employer and employee possible, but if the employer is a corporation, as the committee of a co-operative agricultural society is in effect, this most desirable condition is eliminated and the circumstances approximate more to the unsatisfactory state of a commercial industrial country with its perpetual strife. So I am forced to the conclusion that rural industries, as distinct from the mere improvement in the methods and organization of agriculture, depend for their establishment and success upon individuals. In creating employment and prosperity on a non-business footing the philanthropic employer, it is true, creates potential unemployment and distress, and would be better occupied in fostering art and literature and in supporting handicrafts by acting as an appreciative home market for them; but at the same time it is equally clear that while the philan-

thropic industrialist would be dangerous to the industrial stability of the country, the class which now seeks to exploit its farm labourers on a starvation wage would be altogether fatal. It is a supreme chance for such of our Irish gentry as are not too anti-Irish, and it is to them rather than to Government departments, on which we are becoming painfully dependent, that we must look for the work of afforestation and the consequent encouragement of the essentially rural industry of raising young trees in nurseries.

Now as to markets. Here again we want above all things business experience and intelligence and an incentive to sell well. Production and sale are interdependent, for we cannot have markets unless we produce cheaply: I do not mean the production of a cheap article but of a good article made at the least possible cost. Our rural industrialists will have to be as familiar with their cost sheets as with their bank books or their petty cash accounts. Comparative cheapness is essential if we are to produce the necessaries of life, since we shall be in competition with established concerns on a large scale: the alternative of manufacturing luxuries, though desirable as an addition to essential industries and as an incentive to the development of a national æsthetic taste, is unsound as an industrial policy: it is

too restricted. The people of Ireland who should be the consumers of Irish industrial products are hard-headed in business and they are not rich. Comparatively few carry out the principles of voluntary protection now practised by the more zealous exponents of twentieth-century patriotism. If Irish goods are dear an Irish labouring man will find it hard to be patriotic on 15s. a week or less, while no man is less inclined to spend an unnecessary penny than an Irish farmer. Moreover, even the most friendly of customers will not put up with unbusinesslike methods, and we must learn the value of precision, accuracy, punctuality, and above all of standard and uniformity in quality.

CHAPTER IX

CO-OPERATION AND THE MODERN FUNCTION OF ARISTOCRACY

To Sir Horace Plunkett must undoubtedly be given the credit of introducing the principle of agricultural co-operation in a practical form into Ireland; and to his teaching and example must to a large extent be ascribed the wider recognition of the responsibilities of property. But this doctrine of responsibility had been preached many years before Sir Horace Plunkett advocated it in his excellent little book "Noblesse Oblige." Five-and-twenty years earlier Mr. Standish O'Grady was writing his illuminating leading articles in the "Kilkenny Moderator," urging the gentry, even yet, as he thought, the best class in Ireland, to a better understanding of their duties in life.

In the last chapter I have been at some pains to point out that in co-operative methods and in the help of a modern aristocracy conscious of its responsibilities lie the chief hopes of a rejuvenation of rural Ireland. Each has its function, though they may often overlap. Neither entirely

meets the case alone, for each possesses shortcomings and is subject to dangers of the kind I have already referred to. In a perfect order of things they would exist side by side, assisting and at the same time counteracting one another. They seldom do, however, for the ideas at the root of them are radically different, if not actually antagonistic. Self-help produces a spirit of independence which tends somewhat to overrate the value of individuals working together and to underrate that of the single individual of exceptional influence who has the exceptional qualities to use that influence in the right way. On the other hand, where the individual has used his exceptional opportunities well, the spirit of self-help is seldom developed because the incentive of self-preservation is lacking: there is a tendency to take a rich man's efforts too much for granted. This is true in a general way. Yet, if there are two traits in the Irish people which are universally accepted as traditionally characteristic, they are devotion to a leader, and especially to a leader of the aristocratic type, and an inclination to think and work in groups; and they lend themselves equally to both methods of rural salvation.

The village of Foynes is a delightful example of their combination. But Foynes has in Lord Monteagle a man imbued with

the aristocratic idea who has been, at the same time, one of the leaders of the co-operative movement, and was President of the I.A.O.S. during the years when Sir Horace Plunkett was at the head of the Department. In Foynes, indeed, is to be found a co-existence of all the elements which go to make for a sound and healthy atmosphere in rural Ireland. Side by side with Lord Monteagle's sawmills are a number of flourishing co-operative undertakings and a Gaelic League branch which has had the advantage of the active membership of the Hon. Mary Spring-Rice. Aristocratic influence did as much as anything to stifle the Irish language; it can do, perhaps, more than anything to revive it.

Miss Dora Knox, Lord Monteagle's secretary, has sent me the following account of the work that is now being done at Foynes. In view of the often not unfounded charges of bigotry made against the Ascendency, it is worth remarking that Miss Knox is a Catholic, an Irish speaker, and a lady of pronounced views on the nationality of Ireland.

FOYNES SAW MILLS, LTD.

Started by Lord Monteagle in 1883, in order to give employment. Employs 30 to 40 hands.

About 38 houses have been built for workmen and others.

Does a considerable amount of business in building materials and coal. Limestone quarry, working off and on, employing up to 20 hands.

Lord Monteagle started the saw mills with the intention of turning it into a profit-sharing concern, and still hopes to do so when a favourable moment arises.

SHANAGOLDEN AND FOYNES CO-OPERATIVE POULTRY SOCIETY

Started in 1901 by Miss Alice Spring-Rice.

After several years of very precarious existence and much opposition, it is now a most flourishing concern.

Turnover £8000. Staff-manager and 5 employees, 8 collectors. Pays a dividend of 5 per cent. Has a sinking fund, and has built a large store out of profits. Managed by local committee.

FOYNES CREDIT SOCIETY

Started in 1903 with a turnover of £250.
Turnover now £1000.
Managed by local committee.

FOYNES CO-OPERATIVE WHEAT-GROWING SOCIETY

Last autumn Lord Monteagle offered the working-men of the place seven statute acres of good land at an easy rent if they

would form a co-operative wheat-growing association. The idea was taken up with enthusiasm. A strong committee was formed entirely of working-men. More shares were applied for than could be dealt with. The land was tilled under the advice of Mr. Michael Fitzgerald of the I.A.O.S. and a winter sowing was made which promises to yield a very good crop.

THE SHANNON INDUSTRIES (CO-OPERATIVE)

A small and rather struggling concern, having practically no capital. Has given a certain amount of employment to women and girls in knitting and embroidery and weaving.

FOYNES GAELIC LEAGUE

Started in 1902.

For many years was a most active and enterprising branch. A good class is being held for young people over school age and Irish is being taught in both schools, two out of four of the teachers being native speakers and all holding the Nat. Board's Certificate. An average of £7 to £8 has up till now been sent to head-quarters every year.

An Aeridheacht or Feis has been held nearly every year, a great many concerts and entertainments have been given and

large numbers of competitors sent to the Limerick Feis.

The branch sent a scholar to Carrigaholt last year.

FOYNES UNITED IRISHWOMEN

Started in 1914.

Good local committee, nearly all of shopkeeper, farmer and tradesmen class.

District nurse has been started more than a year and is very successful. Supported by fees, subscriptions and proceeds of local entertainments.

First-aid classes were held under the Department Scheme and successfully put through, 14 out of 20 getting certificates. Cocoa scheme is in work at the Girls' School and is self-supporting, except for cost of equipment.

Coffee van under management of the committee attends at the harbour when night work is going on.

School dental clinic : arrangements nearly completed to start this. Class-room given rent free by Lord Monteagle. The committee keep it in order and it is used as a library and for meetings and entertainments.

FOYNES WORKMEN'S CLUB

Founded in 1899.

Building given rent free by Lord Mont-

eagle and kept in repair, otherwise self-supporting.

Income from members' subscriptions and letting to travelling companies.

Membership 70 to 100.

I.A.W.S. DEPOT

Rent a large store from the Harbour Board.

Sale of manures.

Turnover £2000 to £3000, business increasing rapidly.

Such places are rare. As a rule the further the aristocratic idea is developed the more subordinate become any co-operative enterprises which may exist within its sphere of influence; or if a co-operative undertaking thrives it is among the classes least touched by that influence, and, moreover, where self-help is less in fashion than his lordship's it is likely to be an easy form of co-operation whose profit has been well demonstrated by a neighbouring and more energetic parish; the creamery, for example, rather than the poultry society. At Adare, perhaps the best example in Ireland of the working of the aristocratic idea in practice, there is a creamery, but no other co-operative society, though the tobacco-growing scheme is to some extent run on co-operative lines.

The farmers and holders of cottage plots

who grow tobacco, not only in the neighbourhood of Adare, but in places as far apart as Tullamore and Ardagh, to be made up at Lord Dunraven's big rehandling station, are paid so much per pound for their leaf on the understanding that they will receive any surplus that may be realized, after the cost of manufacture is deducted, in the form of a bounty. This rehandling station gives employment to a large number of hands, though war taxes and war conditions have hit it hard; and the cigarette factory where girls can earn four shillings a day (and an extra day's holiday for every 1000 cigarettes they roll in excess of 1000 per day) is an additional source of income to the village. Adare is now one of the most interesting places in the country. It will be doubly instructive to those interested in the study of social conditions in rural Ireland when the succession of one or two generations will have revealed how far the modern function of the aristocracy can be regarded as genuine and permanent. The bigger the work that is being done now, the greater would be the aggravation of distress if the present policy were to be discontinued. I have no intention of giving a description of Adare industries, for besides tobacco other interesting work, such as osier growing, is carried on and farms are worked—with the respect for game and abhorrence of mud

generally associated with demesne agriculture. I am rather considering the value of Adare to Ireland, regarding it as an unusually large example of philanthropic industrialism. To assume that it is merely the hobby, the personal gratification, of the present Lord Dunraven would be very unfair to him, though we have no guarantee that his successor will see the matter in his light. I take it that at Adare Lord Dunraven has made a genuine attempt to do something towards building up Ireland from within. The future will show whether his policy is economically and psychologically sound; at least he has created a temporary prosperity.

There is something more that Adare has definitely done. It provides us with an example, and example is of great importance. The farmer who visits a model farm, though he may have no use for its foibles, leaves it with a sense of having seen something he would like to copy as far as his own conditions allow; even the picture-hat, which I must admit as a case against the value of example, has come to us through the habit of each social stratum copying the richer one above it. And in Adare an attempt has been made to create a model village.

Irish villages are, as a rule, unpleasing, but the country which surrounds them is

beautiful. Now the old pastoral beauty of England has passed from her. The hideousness of the Black Country and the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire and Lancashire is notorious. And the South, too, is rapidly ceasing to be anything more than a suburb of London. Take, for instance, a railway journey from London to Bristol. Perhaps a pretty bit of woodland attracts your eye as you look out: better it were not there, than a thing of beauty to form the background for the patent pills of a quack or the sauces of a German Jew. At another place a stretch of river, full of a bygone charm, is the setting for the villa of a retired tradesman aping the country gentleman. And do you but chance for a moment to escape from the pestilence of commercialism, you have not time to enjoy your short respite before you are whirled into the suburbs of a town, whose few historic memories are engulfed in a wilderness of red brick, whose only claim to renown lies no longer in the history of sieges and battles but in the manufacture of stomachics or corsets, and whose walls no longer call up pictures of warriors and prelates but of oil kings and tramway peers. It is only by searching that you can find and rejoice in the oases. As you fly through the country at sixty miles an hour you cannot even see them: like wild birds frightened at the

approach of man, they do not survive when their quiet and natural simplicity is disturbed by the advent of modern railways and motor-cars. At the picturesque inn, where once the stage-coach used to change its horses, you will now find a cyclists' tea-room, and where once stood the old turnpike gate, a modern railway station forms the hideous tombstone of a superseded time. Nine-tenths of the English applaud this destruction: with them Mummius stays at home.

In England, in fact, the real function of the country is to form the playground of the town, and the characteristic of the country is derived from the town. There are few places where you can look around you without seeing, or at least fearing to see, the smoke of some manufacturing centre. You can never reach the summit of a hill without half expecting to see below you the tall chimneys of some factory, or turn a corner without feeling that you may be confronted by a patchwork villa, the "country residence" of a man whose business calls him daily to the neighbouring town. Yet for all that England has to a great extent preserved the beauties of her villages. Those on the borders of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire are, I am sure, unequalled anywhere, and even where the print of commerce is indelibly stamped on

its surroundings an English village is often a beautiful thing, with its old-fashioned farm-houses and weathered church. But in Ireland we have in every respect the opposite conditions: an unspoilt countryside whose towns are of itself; yet those country towns and villages are an eyesore and a blot on the country. People may ascribe this to historical conditions, climatic influence, intemperance or gombeenism; it does not affect the fact, a fact that must be admitted. The streets of our small towns and villages are dirty, their architecture bleak, their churches cold.

In this land of surviving abnormalities I know of none more striking than that presented by our Irish ecclesiastical buildings. In any normal state the churches are part of the heritage of the people; they have not only been mellowed and beautified by time but hallowed by tradition and incorporated in the life of the people by generations of intimate association. The parish churches of England have an air of friendliness, of oneness with the villagers; the cathedrals of Belgium and Germany inspire a national feeling and are the heirlooms of the people in more than a religious sense. For in a normal state the ancient places of worship belong to the people. If a free people changes the form of its religion it is the forms and ceremonies only that are

changed, not the place in which they are performed. When England became Protestant, English churches became Protestant at the same time, and there are buildings in the debatable land of the Balkans which serve now as churches, now as mosques. In Wales, it is true, the people do not possess the ancient churches, but by adopting, in Dissent, the ultra-modern form of Christianity they forfeited knowingly the property which belonged, with their acquiescence, to the Established Church; for the Welsh, as a Welshman euphemistically put it to me, were spiritually languid from the Reformation till the time when the fury of Methodism arose. In Ireland, as in Wales, the people worship in bleak, staring, ill-designed barracks, but only in that respect are the conditions similar. The religion professed by the overwhelming majority of the people of Ireland has undergone no radical change since it was introduced by St. Patrick: yet the people possess scarcely a church which was built before the famine. The foreigner, not content with the political and material spoils of the country, possessed himself also of such of the religious trophies as he did not destroy. Thus we have in the West of Ireland old churches in which the Protestant clergyman holds one congregationless service each year, to remain for 364 days empty and useless as the abandoned mansion of an

absentee landlord. We have the two historic cathedrals of Dublin Protestant and therefore alien. I do not say this from bitterness towards Protestants, who cannot now be blamed, in this matter at any rate, for the actions of their forebears. Individual Protestants can be as good Irishmen and indeed are often better Irishmen than Catholics, but nothing can ever make Ireland Protestant as a nation. Protestantism is foreign in spirit to the Celtic and Latin nations, and in these the alternative to Catholicism is not Protestantism but Agnosticism.

In Ireland, though we have reverence for our Church, we have no reverence for our churches as such. In themselves they can give us no glow of pride, awaken no ancestral or historical feeling which can be welcomed and cherished. The Protestant can see in his place of worship but the spoils of the conqueror, the Catholic in his but the badge of inferiority, and in the few which are beautiful but the modern replica of something vital lost. If a man's wife be murdered is he satisfied to marry another because her face is similar ?

I use the words " badge of inferiority," not as a mere phrase, but advisedly. The Catholic churches of Ireland are as much a disgrace as the Catholic faith is an ornament to Ireland. The loss of the national

ecclesiastical buildings was involuntary, but while discounting much that Sir Horace Plunkett and others have said about the reckless extravagance of our modern church-building, it is undeniable that the making and equipping of the new ones have been deliberate.

These are strong words and require some qualification: they apply to the small towns and country places rather than to the cities where the sense of beauty has not entirely atrophied in eye and ear. Beauty in sound and colour are necessary in religion, above all, in Catholicism; they are a tribute to God, and to deny their importance is, logically, to deny ceremonial, and to advocate the barrenness of a Methodist chapel. If, then, our churches are to be decorated and beautified to the glory of God, surely it should be done with prudence and some discrimination between what adorns and what disfigures.

And what do we get in the country?

I pass over the lack of dignity and the lack of proportion to be seen from outside; in most cases country parishes are poor and cannot afford to pay good architects. The more barn-like and the less pretentious the exterior of a country chapel the better as a rule. Yet it is possible to build a church good to look upon at no greater expense than is often incurred by the gazebos that

dot the country. Spiddal is a case in point. Or look at Quilty and the little church they built there recently. Unless I am greatly mistaken it is a little architectural gem; or perhaps it is only a normally constructed building which is endowed with a fictitious charm by comparison with its neighbours.

This church has a tower, and a tower of some kind should be essential in a country church. It is the little elevated bell hangers which make so many look out of proportion. The tower at Quilty is built on the model of a round tower, though much smaller, of course. Nothing is more ridiculous than sham castles and sham round towers, but to take the round tower as the basis for our country ecclesiastical architecture seems to me perfectly reasonable, and I should like to see all new churches in Ireland built in this way till a definite style, the twentieth-century Irish church style, became recognized. Perhaps the cathedrals might still be built with spires. Some of the modern cathedrals in Ireland are fine buildings and only require a little weathering to be beautiful.

It is, however, with the interiors that my chief quarrel lies. Here again I must except a number of city churches and a few country ones. The exterior is of course important, but it can be redeemed, however bad, by its interior. I know of no better instance

of this, though it is not in Ireland, than Westminster Cathedral. Of course there are people who admire its exterior; personally I think it is amazingly ugly; but once inside I am transported immediately into the Middle Ages, far more, curiously, than in Westminster Abbey.

It is indeed lamentable that the great majority of the men who are in a position to put the aristocratic idea in practice are of a different religious denomination from the people they should be working with and for. But if it will fall to few of them to give a lead to the country in the matter of church-building and the still greater need of decorating church interiors, they can at least set the taste in village-building. In Adare the Catholic church happens to be old and externally to be a fine building. That it should be the Catholic and not the Protestant place of worship is due not to any action on the part of Lord Dunraven, but to the religious history of his family. He is lucky, however, in constructing a modern village around it, to have in it a genuine centre of the community, and not an alien building of merely architectural merit. From a sociological point of view and as an example to our usual dirt, Adare village, clean, spacious and tidy, with its delightful inn (itself managed as one of the branches of the estate business),

is unquestionably an asset to Ireland. How far it is so from what is called the Irish-Ireland point of view is less obvious. It is, to my mind, modelled too much on the English style. I do not suppose that our modern village-builders have any special preference for English models or objection to Irish; it is merely that it has never occurred to them that any suitable un-English or native style could exist. A native style can be evolved, if it does not exist, by taking all that is best in the ordinary unpretentious buildings of the country, preserving and improving it while impressing their distinctive stamp on the new ones. Our men with opportunities to do good in Ireland have a tendency to concentrate on the social side of the country and to neglect the national, which is in effect to feed the body and starve the soul.

Near Kilkenny, at Aut-Even, is another centre of modern aristocratic energy, but the same criticism is hardly applicable to the village building. Yet if I am right in believing that they were built by the same architect as Spiddal parish church, I cannot feel that they are the result of the same happy inspiration. In fact, there is a tendency there to neglect comfort for appearance, without the justification of any exterior effect other than one of the rustic English type. Lady Desart's architect failed to rise

fully to the occasion, though the Aut-Even Hospital, lately erected to the memory of Capt. Cuffe, who had been till his death the life and soul of the place, is very perfect for its intended purpose.

The provision of a really good country hospital is an outlet for the philanthropic aspirations of our modern aristocracy about the value of which there can be absolutely no question. But it is not only this illustration of the discharge of aristocracy's modern function which brought Kilkenny to my mind. I was thinking also of the Kilkenny woodworkers. Most people have heard of them, but few know how good is the work they can turn out. All the woodwork in the hospital was made by them, and if perhaps it is unnecessary to have put such good furniture into the wards, there is great pleasure in reflecting that it, and the better work in the entrance hall and sitting-rooms, is not only good but native.

If they are to be produced, native works of art need native appreciation. We require an Irish aristocracy not alone in their new capacity of benevolent capitalists. It is necessary for them to help the country, as a combination of money and education alone can help it, by encouraging the arts in Ireland. Only so can we save for Ireland artists who are now sometimes claimed as Irish but are really foreign. A man is not an Irish artist

because he happens to have been born in Ireland or of Irish stock; he must at least have the outward form if not the spirit of Ireland in his work. Such a definition robs us of more than one Irishman of standing: of Lavery, for all his portrait of Sigerson; of Wilde, for all his Irish agility of mind; almost of George Moore, though he be the author of "Hail and Farewell" and "A Drama in Muslin." It is in this respect that I see the value of aristocratic influence and the limitations of the co-operative ideal in Ireland. Though, as Foynes shows, it is possible for them to co-exist, and it must be admitted that the very people who appreciate the value of art in life are usually the readiest to appreciate the value of co-operation. And it is conceivable, of course, that the principles which are behind the co-operative movement might eventually so develop the mind of the nation that a new aristocracy of intellect would arise. But in the meantime, were we to depend entirely on co-operation for national salvation, taste would have so completely died out that a stay-at-home agricultural people would have no standards left to call its own and would be forced to adopt those of a foreign nation in place of its own dead ones. We cannot expect people who possess education, energy and money to remain in a country and identify themselves with it, if the only

place they find offered to them is the figure-head president of a co-operative society, their only use to head a subscription list. Lady Desart would hardly have built her hospital, or Lord Dunraven his village, had they not been the inspiration as well as the financial source of the activity going on around them, nor can I imagine any co-operative community in Ireland ever entering upon such undertakings as those.

I have chosen three instances to illustrate the possibilities of the aristocratic idea. They are, thank God, by no means isolated cases. All over the country men who have risen superior to their super-negative class are doing similar work if, as a rule, on a smaller scale. But Foynes, Aut-Even and Adare are the most striking examples within my knowledge of individual attempts to put rural industrialism on a new basis, and Foynes is especially interesting not only because it shows a combination of two principles usually incompatible in practice, but because in that place they recognize the value of the Gaelic tradition.

I have dealt at some length with what appears to me to be the modern function of aristocracy not only because it illustrates the response of the landed gentry to Sir Horace Plunkett's teaching, or perhaps to a kindred impulse of their own, but also because by such a comparison we can

estimate with greater truth the relative place and value of co-operation in our national life.

It is almost impossible to pick out any one village in Ireland as specially illustrative of the successful working of the co-operative idea. I choose Bridgetown in Co. Clare, simply because I know the place intimately and I can describe how it has been affected by co-operation better than I could in the case of some place where the results, perhaps, were more striking, but where my facts would be gleaned from a single visit and a few hours' talk with the local secretary, who could give me what information he thought fit.

Though nothing has been done there by private enterprise to contribute to the industrial revival except excellent farming, even Bridgetown emphasizes the importance of an efficient and energetic class of landed gentry, and I suppose this is equally the case in all co-operative communities, at any rate in Ireland. Mr. Ernest Brown was one of the first landlords to adopt the attitude of reasonableness which resulted in the Land Purchase Act of 1903 and to identify himself also with the political aspirations of the country. After a few years spent in reclaiming his demesne from the heritage of moss, weeds and swamps bequeathed him by two generations of occupation by super-

negative interlopers, Philistines who not only grew crop after crop of oats on the same field without manure but changed the name of the place from Clonboy, its ancient and present name, to "Keeper View," he became imbued with the co-operative spirit which was abroad—in this respect he was no pioneer in Ireland, it is true, but a glance of the co-operative map of eight or ten years ago will show that he was in Clare.

Bridgetown was a miserable enough place when the Browns returned to live at Clonboy after an absence of fifty years. Good farming and the regular employment of labour, synchronizing as they did with the better conditions of life which began to manifest themselves in the first decade of this century, made a big change in Bridgetown, but in themselves they would not have made the place in any way remarkable or different from a thousand other villages. Drunkenness decreased there, as elsewhere, with increasing self-respect; farming improved there, as elsewhere, with peasant proprietorship. But it was not until a co-operative society was instituted that any marked spirit of energy and self-reliance was perceptible.

I remember well, almost the first time I was at Clonboy, the Bridgetown band turning out and marching for hours in the darkness

of the night up and down the road, playing the weird and inspiring Lament of Shane O'Farrell. (It was the same band which caused Lady Super-Negative to exclaim at the wedding of one of the Miss Browns, "How can they allow that awful pandemonium in a gentleman's place; this country is not civilized.") It was the men who composed that band for the most part who assembled in the school-house, to hear Mr. Paul Gregan expound the doctrine of co-operation with such eloquence as to convert the lukewarmness of the reverend chairman's opening words into an enthusiastic speech later in the evening; as to give co-operation so good a start in Bridgetown that the after jealousies which arise in every community in Ireland and the scheming of traders failed to have any serious effect on the success of the society.

But the presence of the man of position was needed, first to provide the initiative necessary to promote the idea at all, and later to act as the impartial oracle which is needed to conciliate and hold the balance between the inevitable factions.

It is a commonplace in Ireland that a small minority is able to set a whole community fighting, however little wish to quarrel may exist. In every co-operative society I suspect similar initial troubles have to be faced: in one a difference may

arise as to the site of the creamery or store, and sometimes has been known even to wreck the whole scheme; in another two sections may support rival candidates for the secretaryship; in yet another the naming of the society may be the bone of contention between two parishes or townlands. Later on when the Society is established it has to contend with the ignorance of the deeper principles of co-operation and the pennywise shortsightedness which accepts the tempting prices of established traders, who only wait till they have cut the young society out of existence by dumped rates to raise their charges and lower their quality once more. And it must be remembered that a few blacklegs have considerable power to damage a society in its early stages.

Mr. Hogan, the secretary of the Bridgetown Co-operative Society, in a letter he wrote me giving particulars of its progress, refers to "uneducated co-operators" in connection with the small loss on the first year's trading. His letter is itself an excellent account of the working of his society and I quote it in full:—

"The Bridgetown Agricultural Society was started in August, 1911; no trading was done until January 2nd, 1912. It was registered the 11th November, 1911, under the Industrial and Provident Act 1893.

"The turnover of the Society's trading in Agricultural goods was £741 18s. 7½d., and that year the Society met a loss of £12 8s. 3d., which was due to uneducated co-operators; and we had to meet the competition of the day.

"In 1913 a Hired Implement Society was attached, consisting of 1 horse sprayer, 1 potato digger and 1 manure distributor. Value of machines at end, less depreciation, was £42 6s. 4d. Total earnings for year were £17 9s. 9d. The Agricultural Department turnover of this year was £1153 2s. 7½d. The result of 1913 trading was a net profit of £6 8s. 5d.

"In 1914 the Society's turnover was £1492 16s. 10d.; earnings of hired implements were £12 17s. The result of the 1914 trading was a nett profit of £11 1s. 8d.

"In 1915 the Society added other machines to the Hired Implement Society, and this branch now consists of 1 horse sprayer, 1 reaper and binder, 1 slag distributor, 2 turnip sowers, 1 disc harrow, 2 potato diggers, 1 knapsack sprayer. Value at end less depreciation, was £81 17s., and the total earnings of year were £33 13s.

"Also this year, 1915, a Poultry and Egg Society was attached and resulted in a turnover of £553 4s. 5d.

"The agricultural sales were this year £1897 10s. 4½d. Our audit has not taken

place as yet, therefore I cannot give the nett profit for 1915.

" To sum up.

	SALES.						EARNINGS.								
Year.	Agricultural Goods.			Poultry and Eggs.			Hired Implements.			Profit.			Loss.			Total Sales.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1912	741	18	7½	nil									12	8	3			
1913	1153	2	7½	nil			17	9	9	6	8	5						
1914	1492	16	10	nil			12	17	0	11	1	8						
1915	1897	10	4½	553	4	5	33	13	0							2450	14	9½

" We are in possession of a beautiful store on the bank of the Shannon at O'Brien's Bridge, which cost the Society £234 19s. 4d. to erect. According to statistics I have taken the tillage has increased 15 per cent, due to the Hired Implement Society. Poultry is taken up in a serious way since we started the Poultry and Egg Society.

" Our Agricultural Department is a boon to the farmers of the district, for all goods are sold under a guarantee of analysis of percentage of purity and germination given on all seeds, and percentage of oils and albuminoids given on feeding stuffs.

" We keep up supplies as far as our overdrawing powers allow us ; we have the use of £1000, and nearly at all times of the year we make full use of this amount.

" Furthermore, the Agricultural Society laid the foundation stone of Co-operation, and on that foundation we have the three societies working : Agricultural, Hired Im-

plements, and Poultry and Egg. Also it founded the Creamery Society,* which is working very successfully. It cost us the sum of £1400 odd to erect. It is going on its third year working."

By way of comment on this letter I would say that Bridgetown has benefited from co-operation, as I know myself, in four distinct ways. It has learnt business methods and made more money than it would have made without co-operation. It has gained a spirit of independence and self-reliance. It has increased its tillage and so its employment of labour. It has saved for the country the energy of its secretary and creamery manager, the former at least of whom, I know, would have otherwise been an emigrant to America. It has gained morally, psychologically and materially. And if a mere parish has thus profited, how much must Ireland as a whole have benefited from co-operation, how much must it do for her in the future ? It is clear that Sir

* The Creamery Society is separate from the others. Their success gave the farmers of the district sufficient confidence in themselves to set up a creamery within a hundred yards of an old-established one belonging to the most powerful private firm in the country, because they felt that by so doing they would get the full fruits of their work. The result has justified their self-reliance, for there is now the milk of nearly 500 cows going into their co-operative creamery, while that of less than half that number finds its way into the other ; and the price of the milk is higher than that given by the private concern.

SIR HORACE PLUNKETT

Horace Plunkett has done more for his country (and we must remember that to him Ireland is his country) than many of his countrymen have given him credit for. To-day he commands the adulation of a few and the respect of many, but he is the object of suspicion with the majority of Irishmen. I look to Home Rule for the breeze that will dispel the political fog in which we grope, to reveal Sir Horace Plunkett in his true colours as a public man in Ireland.

CHAPTER X

OUR FUTURE POLITICS

One of the most striking fallacies I know is the idea that every Irishman is a born politician. That we have not, and never have had under the Union, any politics properly speaking in Ireland is a truism to everyone in this country who has ever thought about the matter. We have, however, a tendency to adopt the Englishman's view of life in general, and with it his view of us. To an Englishman the question of Home Rule is essentially a question of domestic politics; to us it is an international question. We have had no healthy differences of opinion on matters which should normally produce them; and we have subordinated everything to the one issue, pro-Irish or anti-Irish, at times a confused issue enough, for all its simplicity of statement: truly much ill-advised action and *raimeis* have been countenanced and applauded in the name of Ireland; and much good work has been hampered by men who took her name in vain. Since the land agitation, which aroused the whole countryside to a fierce onslaught on a hostile and alien

class, and which, so far as it can be called political at all, was a part of a nation's not a party's politics, rural Ireland has been touched less than ever by political questions. Self-government for Ireland means that the rural classes, the weakest in influence at Westminster will be the strongest in College Green.

It is much easier to foresee the causes of division of opinion which will constitute our future politics than to foretell in what manner they will divide us into parties, for we can hardly hope to be without the party system in our new political state, though "Æ" has recently offered us an original and practical method of doing so.*

Everyone has, of course, been struck by the obvious anomaly which existed before the Home Rule Act was placed on the Statute Book: the farmers and their dependents, normally a conservative community, supporting the Radical party in England, while the naturally democratic and free trade industrial population of North-East Ulster has been firmly allied to, and has even dominated, the English Tories. It is equally obvious that this unnatural division of circumstance must give way to a normal division of thought, or at any rate of self-interest.

I take it for granted that in the first

* In "The National Being."

general election of the Irish Parliament candidates will not seek election offering the constituencies any cut-and-dried political creed, but will go in on their personal merits, as men likely to make good legislators (not merely as disciplined voters such as we have employed hitherto at Westminster), while many will get seats for retrospective merits as a reward for long service in "the cause."

There is some danger of the elections proving, as County Council elections in many parts actually are, mere faction struggles between the adherents of individuals, worked by a mixture of influence and an evil survival of clannishness; but I think the fear of this is much exaggerated, since the personal influence becomes more eliminated the larger the area of the contest: blackthorns and porter may win a district councillorship, they may effect the result of a county council election, but the effort and expense of these methods would be too great to enable them to be very widely adopted in the selection of Members of Parliament.

The first election or two will pass by, perhaps, in preliminary setting the house in order under the Premiership of Mr. Redmond. But it will not be long before a new order will show signs of arising.

We have in Ireland the makings of

more than two parties. The dual system, with minor excrescences, seems to be a recognized British institution, and our constitution is to be slavishly British. So there will be coalitions and the dangers of log-rolling, but possibly when the country adapts itself to the new conditions, the *raisons-d'être* of our numerous parties may to some extent disappear, if men will ever attain a sense of perspective in matters of religion and race. The forces which will operate in creating the future parties are clear enough: the survival of existing fundamental, nay, national differences; the forces at work in the country now but not politically represented; and the natural developments which time alone can indicate.

I suppose we have four parties now, the policy of each of which is mainly determined by its attitude to England. There are the Unionists, a portion of whom will survive as intransigents, or, as we shall have to call them, ironically enough, Repealers. I am assuming (and it is a fairly large assumption) that all Ulster will come in eventually; in any case it will be the national as well as the political business of all other parties to try and bring her in, as it is the common business of all parties in England and France to carry on the European War.

The Official Parliamentary Party, by de-

voting too much attention, though not without some justification, to English opinion, has of late lost touch with Irish opinion, and so has lost influence in Ireland. The English still speak of the "Irish Party," but in Ireland they are coming to be called "Redmondites," and the termination "ites" is a sure sign of waning influence. They command, nevertheless, a greater following than any other party, and their supporters will form the backing of each of our own main or central groups in the future, being no longer bound on pain of being branded as factionists or soreheads to implicit and almost unreasoning support of a party charged with carrying out one idea and one alone, "Home Rule *über alles*," as the Nationalist Party has been at Westminster for a generation. The bulk of them will become the Conservative party, not Tory Democrats as the English Conservatives are, trying to outbid the Radicals for the favour of an industrial working-class population, but conservative of the conservative, representing the landowners (and we know how comprehensive that term is since the Land Acts) and the clergy, striving for no reforms save such as would benefit the rural districts. I can see them at first repelling attacks on the existing system of education, yet full of energy for certain changes, pressing to get Land Purchase completed, even

contemplating great undertakings such as the drainage of the Barrow and the Shannon or the nationalization of the railways, and then gradually settling down to the status quo and jealously guarding it, careful to parsimony of money and down on extravagance; unless bribery and corruption are to pollute our national assembly as everyone knows they pollute many of our local ones. Let us have done with the buying and selling of votes, with nepotism in its multifarious forms, above all with the wholesale murder of the poor by the corrupt election of incompetent dispensary doctors in the country districts. These are evils which are greatly due to the system of Irish government in the past, which bred in the people who were not allowed to govern themselves a complete lack of sense of political responsibility; but we have served our apprenticeship now in self-government, in a small way, since 1898, and it were almost as well to have an alien government which evinces now a patronizing lack of understanding, accompanied by what is called conciliation, now a pseudo-sympathetic dole-giving emphasized by coercion, emasculating as both have been to the Irish nation, as a foul one of our own making.

The All-for-Irelanders are a party too, and will have to be reckoned with. They are, of course, at present the party of a

man rather than an idea, though some adhere to the idea who have no love of the man, seeing in it an unadventurous mean between what they regard as the extremists who have formed the two official Irish Parties in the past. To call the Nationalist Parliamentary Party extremists now would be manifestly ridiculous : the war has shown that. For my part, I would say that the Carsonites on the one hand and the Sinn Feiners on the other are the extremists, though I venture to say that there is more genuine honesty of purpose and at the same time a more complete distortion of vision and inability to recognize hard facts among the latter. In speaking of parties we must include the Sinn Feiners.* The events and undercurrents of the last twelve months have made it harder than ever to estimate the strength of Irish parties or even to say what parties exist. Sinn Feiner with some has come to mean pro-German, with others anyone who is not a blind follower of Mr. Redmond. Sinn Fein is an excellent name and describes the principles it stood for plainly and succinctly, principles which in spite of their limitations could not but appeal to patriotic and thoughtful

* Since writing these pages the so-called Sinn Fein Rebellion has taken place. What I have said, however, appears equally true now. In a sense the majority of Irishmen have become Sinn Feiners, but they are not therefore necessarily Republicans or advocates of Rebellion.

Irishmen. Its policy was to concentrate attention on everything Irish and to foster self-reliance by looking to ourselves, not to England, for our salvation. The fundamental idea was that Ireland should be self-supporting, self-contained and, above all, Irish. It is interesting to remember that "Sinn Fein," the newspaper which gave expression to the ideas of its leaders, frequently praised the co-operative movement, just as it supported the Gaelic League and the industrial movement, as an example of the methods which should be adopted by Irishmen to emphasize and consolidate Irish nationality. The Sinn Feiners, using the word in its wider sense, are a large section of the population and one which automatically increases as time inevitably adds new occasions for criticism of the Parliamentary Party, who correspond to some extent (in a country whose centre of authority is not within its own shores) to the government of a normal constitutional country. Even the original Sinn Fein Party, on which pro-Germanism and the issues created by the war had, of course, no bearing, was far from negligible. They have had no representative in Parliament, unless we so regard Mr. Ginnell, whose principles are often excellent, but whose sense of proportion and tact is not always so. There are a few, however, in such bodies as the Dublin Corporation, and they

are a real and existing force which will have in the future a strength very much the same, I should think, as what I have called the New Repealers, and will tend perhaps to be absorbed into more normal parties at a similar rate.

There are two other great unrepresented forces in Ireland, for there comes a time when what is called a " movement " becomes a permanent force in the country and touches the people in a way no literary or artistic movement can. The Gaelic League and the I.A.O.S. have kept themselves outside politics in spite of the desperate attempts of politicians to drag them into the game. In the self-governing community these cannot possibly remain outside : the I.A.O.S. may still preserve its non-political name, but as it is certain that the farmers will form the backbone of the conservative party, so it is certain that that party will be the champion of the I.A.O.S. I am speaking of the time when our unnatural and abnormal tangle begins to be unravelled, when the so-called political issue of Home Rule will not dominate every consideration and it will be possible for the I.A.O.S., whether its members form the bulk of one political party or not, at least to be free from the stigma of " anti-Irishism in disguise " which, from I know not what motive, one or two of our short-sighted politicians have tried to

give it and have to some extent succeeded. And the I.A.O.S., in turn, with its freshness of ideas and stimulating ideals may quicken the centre party I pictured so lethargic into a greater energy and intelligence than it could attain unleavened by such an influence.

But what of the Gaelic League, or the men it comprises, for can it shed its outworn trappings without losing its life-blood ? Out of it and the more truly national of the present nationalists, and reinforced by many who are now devolutionists and by men of no political bias, will come the party in which our hope of a rejuvenated Ireland will lie. For it will not be satisfied with " Ireland a political nation once again " or with no higher ideal than big dividends and low taxes ; and whatever its numbers, it will never rest till it has saved from ruin such of our ancient nationality as still survives, and will strive to build on that foundation an edifice suited, not to England or America, but to Ireland herself.

This Irish-Ireland party, as I may call it, for the preservation and extension of the existing Irish language, customs and everything peculiar to Ireland will be one of its main planks, will be to some extent an idealist party and will be largely subject to the influence of unbalanced enthusiasts, as the Conservatives may suffer from the

mildew of content. The I.A.O.S. in so far as it embodies an ideal for Ireland cannot be systematically opposed to a party which, like the Irish-Ireland party, also stands for an ideal for Ireland. This and an anglicized habit of thought will prevent the Conservative-I.A.O.S. party and the Irish-Ireland party from forming the two main central protagonists opposed to one another in Parliament; and this too will strengthen the I.A.O.S. leaders in the resolve to remain still officially outside politics. Yet, as I have said, the ideas of the leaders of the co-operative movement will have a bracing effect in the relaxing atmosphere of Conservatism; and they too will be influenced by the party to which the members of the co-operative societies will belong; for these men will be keenly interested in political questions, many of which will have a direct bearing on agricultural interests and consequently on the interests of the I.A.O.S., so that its leaders may have to espouse a political cause from time to time. In so far as the individual members are stubborn Conservatives they will be inclined to oppose the Irish-Ireland party, especially as farmers are as a rule the least "Irish-Ireland" of Irishmen; but a common cause may, and will, I think, be found in several measures affecting rural Ireland.

Sir Horace Plunkett is the undisputed

leader of the I.A.O.S. He may be the future leader of many Irishmen unconnected with co-operation who are sick of talk and would see action take its place. In 1904, referring to the Gaelic League, he wrote :

" Among these new forces in Irish life there is one which has been greatly misunderstood ; and yet to its influence during the last few years much of the ' transformation scene ' in the drama of the Irish Question is really due. It deserves more than a passing notice here, because, while its aims as formulated appear somewhat restricted, it unquestionably tends in practice towards that national object of paramount importance, the strengthening of character. I refer to the movement known as the Gaelic Revival. Of this movement I am myself but an outside observer, having been forced to devote nearly all my time and energies to a variety of attempts which aim at doing in the industrial sphere very much the same work as that which the Gaelic movement attempts in the intellectual sphere—the rehabilitation of Ireland from within. But in the course of my work of agricultural and industrial development I naturally came across this new intellectual force and found that when it began to take effect, so far from diverting the minds of the peasantry from the practical affairs of life, it made them distinctly more amenable to the teach-

ing of the dry economic doctrine of which I was an apostle. The reason of this is plain enough to me now, though, like all my theories about Ireland, the truth came to me from observation and practical experience rather than as the result of philosophic speculation. For the co-operative movement depended for its success upon a two-fold achievement. In order to get it started at all, its principles and working details had to be grasped by the Irish peasant mind and commended to his intelligence. Its further development and its hopes of permanence depend upon the strengthening of character, which, I must repeat, is the foundation of all Irish progress. . . .

"The declared objects of the League—the popularizing of the national language and literature—do not convey, perhaps, an adequate conception of its actual work, or of the causes of its popularity. It seeks to develop the intellectual, moral, and social life of the Irish people from within, and it is doing excellent work in the cause of temperance. Its president, Dr. Douglas Hyde, in his evidence given before the University Commission, pointed out that the success of the League was due to its meeting the people half-way; that it educated them by giving them something which they could appreciate and assimilate; and that it afforded a proof that people who would not

respond to alien educational systems will respond with eagerness to something they can call their own. The national factor in Ireland has been studiously eliminated from national education, and Ireland is perhaps the only country in Europe where it was part of the settled policy of those who had the guidance of education to ignore the literature, history, arts, and traditions of the people. It was a fatal policy, for it obviously tended to stamp their native country in the eyes of Irishmen with the badge of inferiority and to extinguish the sense of healthy self-respect which comes from the consciousness of high national ancestry and traditions. This policy, rigidly adhered to for many years, almost extinguished native culture among Irishmen, but it did not succeed in making another form of culture acceptable to them. It dulled the intelligence of the people, impaired their interest in their own surroundings, stimulated emigration by teaching them to look on other countries as more agreeable places to live in, and made Ireland almost a social desert. Men and women without culture or knowledge of literature or of music have succeeded a former generation who were passionately interested in these things, an interest which extended down even to the wayside cabin. The loss of these elevating influences in Irish society probably accounts

for much of the arid nature of Irish controversies, while the reaction against their suppression has given rise to those displays of rhetorical patriotism for which the Irish language has found the expressive term *raimeis*, and which (thanks largely to the Gaelic movement) most people now listen to with a painful and half-ashamed sense of their unreality.

" The Gaelic movement has brought to the surface sentiments and thoughts which had been developed in Gaelic Ireland through hundreds of years, and which no repression had been able to obliterate altogether, but which still remained as a latent spiritual inheritance in the mind. And now this stream, which has long run underground, has again emerged even stronger than before, because an element of national self-consciousness has been added at its re-emergence. A passionate conviction is gaining ground that if Irish traditions, literature, language, art, music, and culture are allowed to disappear, it will mean the disappearance of the race ; and that the education of the country must be nationalised if our social, intellectual, or even our economic position is to be permanently improved.

" With this view of the Gaelic movement my own thoughts are in complete accord. It is undeniable that the pride in country justly felt by Englishmen, a pride developed

by education and a knowledge of their history, has had much to do with the industrial pre-eminence of England; for the pioneers of its commerce have been often actuated as much by patriotic motives as by the desire for gain. The education of the Irish people has ignored the need for any such historical basis for pride or love of country, and, for my part, I feel sure that the Gaelic League is acting wisely in seeking to arouse such a sentiment, and to found it mainly upon the ages of Ireland's story when Ireland was most Irish."

Since that time Sir Horace Plunkett has been markedly more Irish, but I am doubtful if his sympathetic attitude towards the Gaelic League is capable of sufficient development to make him the leader of a united party embracing all that is best in the two ideals. At least I can say with some confidence that the clerical influence would not be likely to be used with any weight against him. As he said himself in "Ireland and the New Century," the priests were his best allies in starting co-operative societies in the early days. Hundreds of them have become keen co-operators since then, and even Canon O'Riordan in his "Book on a Chapter," as Sir Horace Plunkett called it, while attacking him for some of the charges he had made, as I think with unnecessary tactlessness for a public man and the originator of a move-

ment then still in its infancy, gives him due credit for his sincerity, and willingly recognizes the value of the work he has done for Ireland.

All this, however, is purely speculative. Mr. Redmond is likely to be the first premier and it is probable that he will ask Sir Horace Plunkett to resume the charge of the Department of Agriculture, for public opinion will hardly tolerate the continuance of Mr. T. W. Russell in office. There is sure to be an orthodox radico-socialist party led by Mr. Devlin and including at least some of the Larkinites, though not Mr. Larkin, and this will form the first coherent opposition to Mr. Redmond's government, and their possible successors in office at some more or less remote date. It is only then that an amalgamated party imbued with un-English ideals can be regarded as a possibility.

The presence of men like Sir Horace Plunkett in a party whose ideals and enthusiasms would not be restrained and balanced by the serious traditions of office would be an immense good. Such a party would tend to rush headlong into reforms. They might say, for instance, that, quite apart from the rich grazing plains of Meath and the Golden Vale (the question of tilling which is another matter), Ireland contains large tracts of land which are uneconomic

and a drag on the country's development: outside farms or uninhabited demesnes for the most part let on the eleven months' system. How to make such places a national asset is a problem that will confront our Parliament, the Parliament of an agricultural country. We have the machinery for dealing with them already in existence in the Congested Districts Board and the Land Courts, but to give any tribunal (assuming that the Irish Parliament will obtain such power at a future date) the right of declaring lands to be uneconomically used and therefore subject to forfeiture, even with compensation, is a step to be taken only after very careful deliberation. It would open up great possibilities of "graft" in a country already not entirely free from American political methods. Further, the beauty of Ireland is itself valuable. I do not mean as a commercial asset, though I suppose it is that also to some extent. It is well to remember that utilitarianism leads eventually to the universal sewage farm and to all the evil smells of Japan, and that our public sense of the artistic is not too fine—look at most of the new labourers' cottages; useful they are, but they require creepers to cover their ugliness. Yet on this head no amount of golden blossom or delicate furze-scented breezes can justify in my eyes the sight of one herdsman and a

dog sauntering alone over six hundred acres of fertile land which might support in decency at least twelve families. One farm labourer, even, is of more value to Ireland than many American haberdashers.

CHAPTER XI

OUR FUTURE POLICY

Unless we are to assume that our first Irish General Election will be nothing more than a triumphal return of the present M.P.'s, without more serious opposition than has been offered by the miscellaneous individuals who have lately been appearing at bye-elections to test the value of the Convention System, we who regard parliamentary representatives as fallible persons employed by us to express our views, rather than infallible demigods whose function is to impress their views upon us, must have some definite policy formulated in good time. There has been a depressing lack of constructive thought upon the questions which will be before us when we have a Parliament. Our politicians, if they have been thinking about them, have not been talking or writing about them: they have been absorbed in the war and the "Machine." Home Rule, according to our politicians, is safe, and I am inclined to agree with them, as to the principle if not the Act. That being so, they should turn all the intelligence they can possibly muster to working out

the problems which will immediately face them—presumably in office.

If I suggest some main lines of policy which an Irish Government should adopt, I must begin by saying that I have no special knowledge whatever, being one of the thousands of voters whose vote has atrophied from lack of opportunity to use it.

If we examine our position honestly we find that we are now labouring under far fewer definite or concrete grievances as a result of government from Westminster than we were fifteen or twenty years ago. It is, of course, an indignity for a people not to be self-governing, but this would be called by some a sentimental grievance which, though in actual fact sentiment is one of the cardinal forces governing the world, would not appeal to the Orangeman or tempt him to part company with the devil he knows. Irishmen regard Ireland as a nation. The demand for the recognition of nationality is the greatest argument for Home Rule ; it is intangible and unamenable to facts and figures, but nevertheless not to be discounted for that reason. However, the acceptance of a Parliament in Dublin implies the removal of this grievance, and it does not affect us in considering the future politics of our country. Our surviving grievances—it is idle to deny past wrongs or to say that their effect does not remain

impressed on Irish character and Irish conditions—where they are not retrospective are mainly economic. The industrial and commercial progress of the nineteenth century has left the farmer under the normal conditions of peace a long way behind, and it is because Ireland is an agricultural country that the Union is still an economic grievance. We are dragged in the wake of a rich manufacturing people ; general legislation when it applies to Ireland takes little account of Irish or rural conditions, and when it excludes Ireland or provides differential treatment it creates an argument for a separate legislature, *ipso facto*. It may be asked what grievance we have in this not shared by Lincolnshire or Dorset, but I would answer that apart from unfair discrimination against Ireland such as was attempted in the war retrenchment schemes, and carried out in the matter of the Queenstown mails, the case is not parallel (except on the West Britain hypothesis), since the depopulation of the rural districts, while it means in England only migration to the nearest great town—a few miles, perhaps—in Ireland means *emigration*, for Dublin, Belfast and Cork cannot absorb all our surplus population, and as long as men regard Ireland as their Motherland so long will they naturally regard migration to an English town as emigration. It may also be

argued that it is of great benefit to a poor country to be united in legislation and administration to a rich one, from which money grants can be obtained and whose credit can be availed of; that the prosperity of one section of the community or state conduces to the general welfare of the whole; that all are taxed alike. But this is a fallacy; though if all taxes were abandoned in favour of a single income tax, if the administration of the two countries were identical and if their tradition and outlook were similar, it would be arguable. The weak point is that the poorer is forced to adopt the standard of the richer, and Ireland must participate in social legislation devised entirely for an English industrial community, and thus acquires tastes out of keeping with her resources; and this in turn breeds the emasculating sycophantism which is one of our most recent and most objectionable characteristics. Nor can a small agricultural country afford an equivalent proportion of the expenses of great armaments which are for Imperial purposes, and that, in effect, means for maintaining and increasing a world trade in which it has little or no share.

Other surviving grievances which occur to me are the excessive cost of our administration and the overlapping due to the lack of effective parliamentary control, which

leads to a multiplicity of jobs and the creation of an enormous official class; the small amount of time which Parliament can now devote to Irish affairs and the large proportion of that small amount occupied by English interference; the cost of special legislation; the excessive and unnecessary police force, which is not only extravagant but also defeats its object, being regarded as an Imperial force and so without the moral sanction of one appointed and controlled by a Home Government. These and the defects in our industrial character which Sir Horace Plunkett, writing in 1904 as a Unionist, emphatically ascribed to England, together with the belief that the existing form of government is prejudicial to the preservation and development of a distinctive Irish nationality, are a very general statement of Irish disabilities which we believe to be due to the continuance of Union with Great Britain. The mild degree of devolution we already possess is responsible for such victories as the Gaelic League has already won in the battle for nationality, and it was Sir Horace Plunkett who succeeded in getting another grievance partially removed when he obtained for Ireland an instalment of Home Rule in the establishment of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.

I have dealt shortly with these disad-

vantages, because I want to work out a policy for the future—a policy for self-governing Ireland, and we must aim at putting our house in order before we set out on new lines.

The first step will be to amalgamate various boards and reduce them to a reasonable number; to abolish many minor offices and to allow superfluous posts to lapse as they become vacant. The Land Commission is to be an Imperial Service, and such residuary duties as it will be required to perform when it is transferred to the Irish Parliament could be discharged by the Congested Districts Board, for its work is also not for ever; perhaps the best of the Land Commission officials might be incorporated with it; or again the Board of Works or the Department of Agriculture might undertake them. In this connection it is well to remember that the machinery of the Land Commission and the Land Courts provide a ready-made system for dealing with uneconomic holdings and deficient production; and these are evils which will form the subject of burning controversy at some future date.

The Department itself must be reorganized, and superfluous positions, especially the junior instructorships—those laughing-stocks of the farmers—abolished. Instead, a farm should be obtained in each county, not for

experimental purposes, but to be worked in the way ordinary farmers should manage their farms: there is more in an ounce of practice than a ton of theory, and we are now forced to suspect that the Department, as at present controlled, hesitates to do this for fear of showing a loss in the annual accounts which would, of course, have to be published for each farm. It has done something in roadside demonstration plots, but as "Pat" says in his book, "My Little Farm," some of which I suppose we may take seriously: "The rule laid down by the expert is to take half a rood on the farm and transform it; mine is to transform the farm, all but the half rood. The peasant suspects that the expert working at the public expense is concerned only to make a show and advertise the Department, without regard to cost in relation to the product."

Reclamation of waste and flooded lands and afforestation would be in the hands of the Department, but they are a matter of available money and credit, and our national finances can alone determine to what extent they can be carried on. The details of agricultural policy can hardly be included in the programme of a party—I merely give the instance of the practical farm as an example of the lines on which improvements could be made.

To the principles which govern our present Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, which I may say, as a practical farmer, is doing good work in the country in many ways, especially in the matter of improving our breeding-stock and in the training of efficient dairymen, foresters, etc., one which is now rigidly excluded must be added, I mean the principle of agricultural co-operation. The jealous dislike with which Mr. T. W. Russell appears to regard Sir Horace Plunkett makes this now impossible. The paradoxical result is a department of agriculture hostile to the farmers' own organization. This cannot be tolerated a moment after the establishment of self-government frees our minds from the obsession of external politics and permits men to think of internal questions on their own merits, uninfluenced by the complications of international issues.

Education, too, demands improvement in Ireland; as, for instance, in the proper teaching of agricultural economics and Irish history; the latter has, I suppose, hitherto been regarded as too dangerous a subject for the budding "happy English child."

The police must be reduced as soon as we get control of them. They must be identified with the people—as the English "bobby" is in England—and not with Dublin Castle. This must be done ostentatiously, as by

making the change of control synchronize with a change, or at least a transference, of personnel and a marked change of uniform. The people and the R.I.C. will never be genuinely on the same side, for memories are too long. If we call them, let us say, the I.N.P. (Irish National Police), clothe them in grey or light green uniform—anything but dark green—and control them from College Green, we may hope to change that.

At the risk of incurring the wrath of those who object to excessive tolerance-proving, we must bring in legislation of our own making, confirming the safeguards embodied in our constitution for the protection of Protestants from imaginary persecution. As those safeguards now stand the Orangeman naturally regards them as worthless; if they were enacted independently by a predominantly Catholic Parliament, only the very sceptical or irreconcilable could still ignore their value. The only Parliament we have had in Ireland in the past, free from English supervision, proved itself liberal beyond all others of its time in religious matters, as has been shown by Lecky. I have not the slightest doubt that our new Parliament, though a different denomination will be in power, will be equally broad-minded. If the Catholics are going to be intolerant—which I say again they will not—they will be unfit

to exercise the functions of government; if they are not, there can be no harm in showing the Protestants at once that they mean to be friendly towards them.

As a matter of fact, the only intolerance from which Ireland, or at any rate the predominantly Catholic provinces of Munster and Connacht, is free, is religious intolerance. Nationalists are far more intolerant of Nationalists of a different shade of opinion than of their real opponents. It should be our object in building up a party aiming at a well-governed Irish Ireland to have as broad a platform as possible: every man (and woman, too, if women's suffrage is adopted in Ireland as it has been in most of the self-governing colonies) can be included who believes that Ireland should take her place as a free and equal member of the comity of independent states which constitute the British Empire.

We hope to have a Parliament actively interested in preserving our Nationality in place of one which, when it is not too preoccupied, has been at least mildly opposed to it. The Irish language, in my opinion, should be made compulsory in the schools (as it has been in the National University) as a regular not an extra subject, and all teachers should be required to spend a specified time at an Irish college or to prove themselves capable of teaching the language

orally as well as in writing; and a general knowledge of it should be made essential in the Post Office and Government positions. I would, however, make the act subject to local option in every county in Ulster in so far as its working applied to that county exclusively. Gaelic should also have a standing equal, at least nominally, to English in the Courts; and public notices, postage stamps and official documents might be bilingual. Irish words, too, might be used when any new term was required; we could call our representatives in Parliament Feisiri instead of M.P.'s; perhaps *Fiosrughad* or *Fiosruighe*, possibly in simplified spelling, might be substituted for Viceregal Commission, and so on; while the many Irish words still retained in our English speech might be standardized by official use, as one or two already are in legal expressions.* At the same time I would make it clear that no attempt would be made to restrict the use of English, the object being only to counteract the past oppression of Irish by its renewed encouragement.

The £1300 granted annually, until last year, to the National Library should be continued. A small additional sum, say £3000 a year, should be set aside for the encouragement of Irish (not necessarily

* e.g., cess, collop.

Gaelic) literature and art. A national theatre, possibly embodying the existing Abbey and Hardwicke Street theatres, should be established and maintained, with a dramatic school attached to it. Such small sums would help to put Ireland on a national basis and to consolidate her international standing in these matters, and would at the same time cause very little anxiety even to the Chancellor of an Irish Exchequer.

These are not vote-catching devices, but they are part of the duty of a patriotic party.

It would be well also to follow the example of Grattan's Parliament in taking the first opportunity after the re-establishment in College Green to demonstrate the fact that though we were hostile to an England which did not recognize our rights we will be friendly to an England which will have done so. Possibly future circumstances will offer us some more definite method of doing this than a felicitous resolution. In this connection it is worth while remembering that war taxation has already turned an alleged Irish deficit of two millions into a contribution to Imperial expenditure of fifteen, and that this sum is likely to be increased, not diminished.

Turning to less general considerations we are faced at once with several tasks implying reforms which will appeal to the bulk of

the Irish public more strongly than those I have outlined above.

The railways and canals are the first. They will have to be brought more closely into touch with the people they serve, to become less autocratic. I am not sure that I advocate nationalization; partly because it would be too great a financial undertaking for an infant Parliament. The usual argument that by stifling competition nationalization makes inefficient railways does not apply to Ireland, for there is practically no inter-company competition as there is in England, nor is the passenger traffic, which might suffer in favour of the goods, nearly as important in an agricultural as in an industrial country, and in Ireland it does not leave a great deal of room for deterioration. If I do not advocate nationalization I would nevertheless hope to see a scheme of compulsory amalgamation embodied in a Railways Bill, which would also give a greater control to Parliament through the Board of Trade or the Board of Works (if these two departments were not combined) than is possible under the existing regime. Every penny which could be saved by means of curtailing directorships, managerships, and their consequent staffs could be used to reduce freights for the benefit of agricultural and semi-agricultural produce. At the same time Parliament could use its increased

control by making such undertakings as the building of new lines and sidings to coal mines and quarries far easier to obtain than they are at present. A good Railways Bill could convert them from being joint-stock companies *par excellence* into national assets.

The party I have in my mind would appoint a Commission to report on the Poor Law System in Ireland. From the findings of that Commission and the brains of intelligent Irishmen it would have to devise an entirely new one. On one point at least in this connection I have definite views myself. The medical system should be completely separate from the unions. Every workhouse should, of course, have its hospital ward attached to it and attended by a local doctor, appointed as workhouse chaplains now are ; but district hospitals, which are at present part of the same building in country places, should have no part with the workhouses. Such an arrangement, besides making them partake of the general atmosphere of a poorhouse and share in its sordid conditions, creates in the very people who are supposed to benefit by the hospitals a reluctance to enter them, unless literally forced by the doctor to do so. I know that any reform in this direction means a considerable capital outlay, but it is one of the most pressing in Ireland and will have to be paid for. The doctors, too, must at all costs be

appointed by a competent authority and not by boards of Guardians who, whatever their aptitude for administering the ordinary local affairs of their district, know nothing whatever of the qualifications of medical men, and are too often swayed by personal influence. Also, though it would be, I believe, altogether an innovation, I would make it obligatory on all dispensary doctors to attend fever and operative post-graduate classes—there would then be less chance of having a poultice applied in a bad case of hæmorrhage: I mention this as the most glaring instance I know of official medical incompetence.

Another thing the unions require is thoroughly efficient inspectors.

The Licensing Laws must be overhauled. A law could be passed forbidding the granting of any new licences for public-houses for a given number of years without the sanction of the Board of Trade. The early closing hours now enforced in many places by the military authorities could be made the basis of a general regulation, or perhaps the hours during which the sale of drink would be permissible might be permanently fixed at 10.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. and the fines for convictions under the laws should be increased.

A stringent law would have to be passed against bribery and corruption, making the

penalties far more severe than they are at present.

To summarize our programme, we have :—

First.—The amalgamation and reconstruction of public departments and boards with a gradual reduction of officials ; together with legislation arising out of circumstances connected with the inception of a new Parliament, such as the acquisition of a Parliament House.

Second.—General legislation, or possibly resolutions, in regard to religious safeguards for Protestants, and the attitude of Ireland towards England and the Empire.

Third.—Special legislation dealing with :
(*a*) Recognition of bilingual status,
(*b*) Encouragement of the Arts,
(*c*) Education,
(*d*) Railways and Canals,
(*e*) The Poor Law,
(*f*) Licensing,
(*g*) Corrupt Practices.

As to finance, I have said little about it. The Home Rule Act provides Ireland with a way of living by careful management, but is certain to lead to friction between the Irish and the British Parliaments. The war has already accustomed us to extra taxation, and it seems clear that the irritating system of dual financial control, with its insulting

restrictions, which it is proposed to set up, could be replaced by complete financial autonomy with provision for an Imperial contribution on our part. The conditions precedent to the reconstruction of the financial relations are already fulfilled, and the control of our own purse is as necessary to us, on the grounds both of expediency and self-respect, as it is feasible in practice.

And it is because any big question involving finance on a large scale cannot now be discussed except theoretically that I have intentionally omitted several matters of policy of burning and vital importance. No party, whether in an Imperial or an Irish Parliament, can make any promises at present to the unpurchased tenants, nor again to the town tenants. Until credit and finance are again in quiet waters no party or Parliament can attempt to deal with the eleven months' system, unoccupied demesnes, or uneconomically worked holdings. At the same time the party which adopted some such programme as I have suggested might be wiser to affirm the principle that land carries definite duties as well as definite rights; even to outline the way in which it would propose to treat those evils, to foreshadow the broad principles of the reforms it would introduce as soon as conditions allowed.

I have expressed no definite opinion on

the question of woman's suffrage, though I see no argument against its adoption in a small country without control of international questions except the hysteria of some of its prominent advocates, which is in no way typical of women in general.

I have also made no reference to payment of members. If this were proposed I would uncompromisingly oppose it—certainly for the first ten years of Home Rule.

These suggestions do not pretend to be either exhaustive or well-informed. They may provoke the formulation of better ones, and they will also show the doubting Unionist that there is pressing and important work to be done in Ireland which we can never hope to see undertaken by an overworked Imperial Parliament.

From what I know of Sir Horace Plunkett I would venture to say that there is little that I have put forward in this chapter with which he would not agree, though of course I have no authority for saying so. If his views would be broader, less circumscribed by the Gaelic ideals which are mine, perhaps the impartial judge would count them by that much the greater, by that much the better for the ultimate good of Ireland. Fifty years ago the aims he had in view would have seemed like an empty dream. He has turned them into reality. Other national hopes, other policies and ideals remain which

may now look like unrealizable dreams, but we will not cease in our endeavour to realize them, and we shall not fail to be encouraged by the great example Sir Horace Plunkett has given us.

"'Tis not for man
To shape his dreams to fit the world he finds,
But to rebuild the world to fit his dreams."

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